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POPULATION, PSYCHOLOGY, AND PEACE

By

J. C. FLUGEL

With an Introduction by

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INTRODUCTION

By C. E. M. JOAD

I AM not sure whether the most valuable thing about Professor Flugel's book is not the air of quiet reasonableness with which it is pervaded. For it is indeed very quiet and very mild. Its mildness, however, is not that of the platitude insipid with veracity. On the contrary this is a book in which the mildness of the expression varies inversely with the pungency of the sense.

A pervasive reasonableness, valuable in all works which are designed to appeal to the reason, has a special office to perform in its relation to the problems which Professor Flugel has chosen to discuss, for questions of population go to men's heads and the prospect of emptying cradles in particular is one at which they look through reddening spectacles.

No doubt there is a number of reasons for this inflammation of men's intellects, and to some of them Professor Flugel makes reference in the text. There is, for example, the "castration complex"; there is the vague fear of loss of national power and prestige; there is the suggestion of decadence, with all its implications of unstated disagreeableness. Above all, I suggest, there are sentimentality and pride. Almost everybody thinks that his nation, class, country, college, school, or what not is better than anybody else's because he happens to belong to it.

" There is nobody like us " we feel. " Right! Then the more there are like us, the better," the consequence being that anybody who suggests that it might not be such a bad thing if we were fewer, is felt to be insulting us personally and resented accordingly.

These considerations should place us under a special debt of gratitude to Professor Flugel for touching on these inflammatory matters without at the same time touching off the passions of those whom they normally inflame. For there seems to be little doubt that the birth rate, already too low to maintain the population at its existing level, will remain low whether we like it or not, and that, so far from becoming more numerous, we are destined to be fewer—in all probability considerably fewer.

Professor Flugel, in agreement with Professor Harding (see page 77), points out that there is no evidence for a "biologically determined desire for children as such," Nature having sought to ensure the continuance of the species by " endowing men with a strong urge towards the sexual act." In other words, sexual gratification is the bait on Nature's hook and life the cost of the parents' pleasure that the children are called upon to defray.

But man, seeking as ever new ways to defeat Nature's biological purposes, has invented birth control the effect of which is to enable him to enjoy the bait without swallowing the hook. It is my guess that nine out of every ten children who have ever been born into the world were, if not unwanted, at least unplanned. They occurred, not because their parents wanted children, but because one or both of them enjoyed sexual intercourse, of which children were the unavoidable products. Hence the question,

"Shall we have a child or not?", is not a question which mankind has hitherto been able effectively to ask. Now, for the first time in history a choice is presented; the question can be asked and is answered, in the great majority of cases, in the negative.

The practice of birth control, already almost universal among the middle and upper classes, has still to spread to the lowest economic stratum of society; when it does so, the production of children may be expected to grow even less. It is at this prospect, the prospect of (other people's) empty cradles, that we are apt to run as it were intellectually amok, and it is precisely here that Professor Flugel can help us, help us perhaps not least by calming us. For he bids us use our reasons. Is it certain, he asks, when the situation is viewed in the clear light of reason and not the red light of panic, that a smaller population would be an unmixed disaster? May it not even be that on balance it would be a blessing? If I mention only three of the many considerations which he adduces, I do so not because they are necessarily more important than the others, but because they come home with special force to myself.

First, on page 24 he considers that "western countries, which have, for the last two centuries and more been the spearhead of European culture, must resign themselves to a relative decrease in influence, power and prestige in so far as these depend on numbers." "In so far as these depend on numbers?" The gist of the matter is in these last six words. For what sort of influence, power and prestige do we want? Those of the "Great Power"? The power of the Great Power depends, no doubt, at least in part upon numbers. But what sort of power after

all is it? The power of the bully who imposes his will upon those who are weaker than himself and blackmails them, if they resist its imposition, by the threat of superior force. Not a very winsome attribute, one would have thought, nor one particularly in consonance with the teaching of Him who renounced the use of force and bade His followers love one another. The sooner States cease to regard the possession of such power as a source of pride, the better for our world. Indeed, if they do not so cease, then in the very near future their refusal will mean the end of our world.

Looking back over man's history, I ask myself which of his many communities have left their mark upon his species, and answer: Ancient Athens with its philosophy, history, statesmanship and all the glory of its various arts; Renaissance Italy with the genius of its versatile men and the wonder of its pictures; eighteenth-century Germany and Austria, whence has proceeded the main part of man's heritage of great music.

Were these power-loving communities? Had they large populations? Very much the contrary. Athens at her prime was inhabited by about a quarter of a million free male citizens; the paintings of the Renaissance came from little quarrelsome Italian City States with populations of at most two or three hundred thousand; the music of Bach, of Beethoven and Mozart, from petty German principalities and provincial Courts. In our own time Norway and Eire, with their three or four million inhabitants apiece, have produced a long line of distinguished men, ranging from Ibsen to Shaw and from Nansen to Yeats, out of all proportion to their numbers. And if it be objected that it is unfair to select the peaks

among mankind and to take them as typifying the pedestrian levels, I would urge my own impression of Denmark before the war, an impression shared by many contemporary observers, with its comparative absence of slums and poverty, its low infant and maternal mortality rates, its free education continuing beyond the age of twenty to university standard for all who could profit by it, as a State which might constitute a model for us all.

These, then, are examples of the kind of influence, power and prestige that seem to me to be valuable. They do nobody any harm; on the contrary, they do us all good.

But what, you may say, about security? Must we not be numerous in order to remain secure? On this I have two comments to make. First, during the last hundred years the large and heavily populated States have rarely been free from war. When war comes, it is Russia and Germany, France and England and Italy and now the United States who are, inevitably, "for it." If, however, one is a member of a small and comparatively defenceless State, one has at least a fair chance of keeping out. In the last war, while all the great States were embroiled, it was Portugal and Eire and Sweden and Switzerland who managed to keep out. Secondly, it may be asked, of what avail are numbers? When the atom bombs began to drop, the dense population of Japan was revealed not as an asset but as a liability. If we are again to live as troglodytes, clearly the fewer the better.

Secondly, there is the question of "culture," a word which has been so debased by vulgar usage that I must needs put it in quotes. It is to "the arts, graces, profundities, and subtleties of life" that Professor Flugel uses the word to refer, and on pages 100–102, you will

find a suggestive discussion of the bearing upon culture so conceived of a declining population. A population relatively small in quantity is, Professor Flugel suggests, the price, if price it be, which we must pay for a population high in quality. He goes further, and hints that, if we are to advance in respect of culture, we cannot expect to do so with our present level of population. It is, at any rate, certain that "those western countries which entered on a fertility race with less advanced lands would have to be prepared to lose some of their pre-eminence in cultural achievement."

The conclusion, I think, is inescapable. But why, I ask again, should it afford grounds for disquietude? For what, after all, are we here, immortal souls, cousins to the angels, of the same species as Plato and Bach and Michel Angelo? To propagate our species, to breed? The animals do no less, and they do it very much better. It is, indeed, one of the most curious features of contemporary society that its members should so plume themselves on their achievements in spheres in which the animals outdo them. For in what do men differ from and excel the beasts? In swiftness or ferocity? The deer and the lion leave us far behind. In size and strength we must give way to the elephant and the whale; sheep are more gentle, nightingales more melodious, tortoises longer-lived, bees more co-operative, beavers more diligent. The ants run the totalitarian State much better than any Fascist. The truth is that our bodies are feeble and ill-adapted to survival; they are the prey of innumerable diseases; their enormous complexity means that they can go wrong in a vast number of different ways, while so poorly are they equipped against the vagaries of the climate that it is only by

clothing ourselves in the skins of other animals that we can survive. Hence to pride ourselves on any of the qualities I have mentioned is to pride ourselves on qualities in respect of which the animals exceed us.

If we share our appetites and desires with the animals, our emotions and passions are shared with one another. Between the knees and the navel we are all pretty much alike. . . . Wherein, then, is the ground of our superiority to the animals, which is also the ground of our distinction one from another, to be found? The answer, I suggest, lies in three things: in our reason, in our awareness of beauty, and in our moral sense, and it is in the development of these three that the progress of evolution, to put it no higher, consists. For my part, I *should* put it higher; for man's life, I think, has a purpose—a purpose which is far from being served by the mere multiplication of life of the same kind and at the same level. What that purpose may be we cannot here fully know, but that it is in some sense bound up with the development of the three faculties to which I have referred—of the reason that knows truth, of the æsthetic sense that recognizes and appreciates beauty, and of the moral faculty that seeks to improve in respect of virtue—I do not doubt.

If it be the case, as I suspect and Professor Flugel suggests, that man's increasing pursuit of these goods, wherewith is bound up the increasing development of his personality, is incompatible with the further increase in his numbers, the fact should cause no regret.

There is a further matter upon which Professor Flugel touches in the discussion to which I have referred on pages 100–102. This is the matter of solitude.

All mature human beings need periods in which they can be alone; if these periods be not granted to them their life becomes a torment. Indeed, there is good reason for believing that periods and places of solitude are necessary to the development of the human spirit. It is becoming clear that in modern England such periods and places will be increasingly difficult of achievement. Throughout most of its history our country has had a population of five or six millions; in 1800 it was eight million; in 1900 thirty-two and a half million; to-day it is forty-two million. We have been able during the last hundred years to maintain a population of from thirty to forty million in an area appropriate to eight or nine, by contriving so to confine and canalize the many that the few were able to remain unaware of their existence. We penned them in towns; we gave them wages so low that they had no resources wherewith to escape from the towns, and we gave them holidays so few—the five Bank Holidays a year—that even if they had had the resources, they would not have had the time. In the years to come, assuming that our civilization survives, there will be holidays for all, extending for at least a fortnight; they will be staggered holidays and they will be holidays with pay. A cheap car selling at £100 or £150 will be made available for these newly-enfranchised millions, with the result that for the first time we shall experience to the full the effects of maintaining forty odd millions in a country designed for a quarter of that population. How can those who care that there should be quiet places, where in solitude a man may know and enter into the possession of his soul—how can those regret the coming decline of our population?

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SOME portion of the argument of this book is not altogether new. A good deal of the substance of Chapter II appeared (albeit in a somewhat different form) in an article in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* in 1921, and again in a chapter of the book *Men and their Motives* in 1934. But I am as unrepentant about this repetition as was the (doubtless legendary) clergyman who, when reproached by his parishioners for always preaching the same sermon, replied that as soon as they had given evidence of having learnt the lessons of this, his current sermon, he would preach them a new one. And indeed the recent increase of interest in questions of population, coming as it does at a moment fraught with the greatest possibilities for the future good or evil of mankind, would seem to afford ample justification for reconsidering—as it is hoped, before a different and a wider public—some of the more psychological aspects of the problem of human numbers.

The message of this little book is not likely to be altogether welcome, since it is in some important respects out of harmony with the majority opinion of the time, and since it asks the reader to face up to certain facts and prospects which are in any case disturbing and embarrassing. On the other hand, it tries to show that some of the alarm that has been recently expressed on the subject of a possible decline in the population of this country is unrealistic in its

origin, and therefore hardly justified in its degree, while in other respects it is positively misleading, and to that extent may cause us to neglect the existence of a real menace from over-population in some other parts of the world. To allay fantastic, unhelpful, or unnecessary fears and at the same time to draw attention to genuine but insufficiently appreciated dangers is a salutary, though perhaps not in all respects a grateful, task. If in attempting such a task I have overstressed my case or in turn neglected factors of importance, there are plenty who will be ready and willing to show where I am wrong, and I can safely leave matters for correction in their hands.

Meanwhile I am convinced that (whatever may be the merits or defects of the following brief exposition) a further ventilation at the present juncture of the psychology of population problems can in the long run hardly be otherwise than beneficial, conducing, as it surely must, to a clearer, wider, and more realistic view of a subject that is now becoming recognized as one of the greatest possible importance.

J. C. F.

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CHAPTER I

MALTHUS AND THE MODERN WORLD

The Strange Contemporary Attitude to Malthusianism

By the time that the chaos resulting from World War II has been reduced to some state of preliminary order, at least one hundred and fifty years will have elapsed since Malthus published the first edition of his famous *Essay on the Principle of Population.* It is a remarkable fact that after this long interval there seems little more agreement concerning the truth and importance of this principle, "as it affects the future improvement of society," than there was when Malthus wrote in 1798—and this in spite of the vast social changes and the great advances in social and economic science which have taken place. Malthus's principle asserts that the human powers of reproduction (like those of all other species) are such that, unless restrained, they inevitably create a pressure of population upon the means of subsistence—clearly, if true, a matter of enormous importance for human welfare, for it implies a fundamental disharmony between the two basic needs of hunger and of love. The dramatic alternative that he presents—restraint or starvation—might well, we should suppose, in itself have been sufficient to ensure that Malthusianism should have been kept in the forefront of discussion. We might even have

expected that those numerous moralists who have regarded sex as the supreme source of sin would have eagerly welcomed the clear indication made by Malthus—himself a minister of religion—of the inevitable penalty for sexual excess. Turning to science, we may remember that both Darwin and Wallace received the inspiration for their momentous doctrine of evolution from Malthus, whose principle is indeed one of the corner-stones of this doctrine, variation (through the influence of numerous hereditary factors) being the other. "Natural selection," according to this doctrine, is a consequence of the fact that the "struggle for existence" implied by Malthus's principle eliminates the less adapted variations and thus ensures "survival of the fittest," viz., those who live long enough to beget offspring, which on the whole will tend to inherit their parents' favourable qualities. The battle of this doctrine of "evolution," bitter enough while it lasted, has been fought and won; discussion centres now around the details of the evolutionary process, the fact of its occurrence being pretty generally agreed. In other words, the great edifice that Darwin built on Malthus's foundation is accepted and regarded as of epoch-making significance, but the foundation itself is still disputed or neglected—a strange and paradoxical fact that certainly merits more attention than it commonly receives. In general, then, both the importance of the subject and its treatment are such as to arouse our very legitimate curiosity, especially at a time like the present, when, after years of slaughter and destruction, the vast majority of mankind is longing for a saner, safer, more constructive world.

In two respects particularly the doctrine of Malthus would seem to have an intimate bearing on our hopes for such a world—viz., in respect of freedom from want and freedom from war. If Malthus's contention is true, we can have no reasonable hope of abolishing poverty except in so far as the necessary restraint on reproduction shall have abolished the pressure of population on subsistence. Nor can we legitimately hope to abolish the threat of war as long as some countries are overfilled and others relatively empty. Over-population is certainly not the only cause of war, but there is little doubt that it is one of the great underlying causes, and by general admission economic distress is an important factor that encourages men to go to war. The very fact that over-population is an underlying cause, rather than an obvious and immediate one, makes its operation all the more insidious and provides the more reason why it should be realized and understood.

The present modest book makes no attempt at a thorough-going treatment of the population problem in its biological, economic, or statistical aspects. It deals rather with certain social, ethical, and political aspects of this problem which will have to be faced if we seriously desire that human life shall be more prosperous and more peaceful; and, above all, with certain psychological aspects which would seem to require our attention if we are to give the ethical and political problems the serious and unbiased consideration that they undoubtedly deserve. The very fact that, in spite of its manifest importance and of the great extension of relevant scientific knowledge, there still reigns a strange confusion as to the significance and applicability of Malthus's

principle to present-day affairs, strongly suggests that this "principle" touches certain deep-seated human emotions and arouses psychological conflicts of the kind with which psycho-analysis has made us familiar. This suggestion is reinforced when we bear in mind that, as was said above, the principle reveals a fundamental antagonism between the two basic needs of hunger and of love, indicating, as it does, that one or other of these needs must inevitably suffer some frustration; and our suspicion that emotional conflicts are involved is still further strengthened when, upon looking a little more closely for actual signs of psychological "resistance," we note the operation on the one hand of the most powerful and widespread of all taboos—that on sex—and on the other of the manifold and violent prejudices associated both with politico-economic and with racial and national questions. Psychology, for all its present scientific shortcomings, has the beneficent capacity of calming and clarifying the troubled waters of moral, social, and political controversy; merely to adopt the psychological point of view, even if our vision is still partially obscured, helps to allay our angry passions and intolerances, makes it possible for us to look at contentious questions more objectively, and to see how they appear to those who approach them from a somewhat different angle. We may hope, then, that a brief consideration of the problem of population from this relatively new and hitherto neglected standpoint may be of help in enabling us to deal at once morally and realistically with this problem in its bearing upon future human welfare.

Three "Refutations" of Malthusianism

Before we can profitably approach these questions of psychology, we must endeavour to obtain some slightly clearer picture of the main biological and demographic aspects of the population problem as they emerge to-day from the mists of controversy and neglect. We may begin with a brief consideration of three "refutations" of the Malthusian principle, the first two of which are based on palpable misunderstandings — misunderstandings, however, which so constantly recur and which seem so difficult to eliminate that they at once arouse the suspicion of being due at bottom to emotional bias. All three have in common the fact that they confuse a *present* population with a supply of necessaries which will be (or may be) available in the *future* (as though we could dine to-day off the fish that we expect to catch to-morrow). It is pointed out that next year and for many years to come more ample supplies should be at our disposal. We should therefore, it is argued or implied, disregard any shortage there may be to-day and look forward confidently to to-morrow's plenty; it is only when all possibilities of further increase in the food supply have been exhausted that we need be alarmed or that we shall have any justification for taking the gloomy view of Malthus.

To turn to these three "refutations" in detail, the first is based upon the very common confusion between the number of people that the earth may ultimately be able to support and the number it can support at the present or any other given moment prior to the attainment of the ultimate full quota.

It is quite erroneously supposed that Malthus's principle applies only to the former condition, and that it will therefore come into operation, if at all, only when all the lands of the earth have been fully occupied and all their resources fully utilized. This is to neglect the all-important distinction between what C. V. Drysdale* has called "static" and "kinetic" over-population. The former would occur only when every available patch of land had been fully cultivated. It is a long way off.† For the present generation at least it presents a relatively "academic" problem, interesting enough in its way, but without immediate bearing upon human weal and woe. "Kinetic" over-population, however, is a very different matter—only too often, indeed, a matter of life or death. It depends on the relation between population and the means of subsistence at any given time and place, irrespective of ultimate population or food supply, or of whether the population or the food supply is at the moment increasing or decreasing. To use Drysdale's analogy, we may compare the two kinds of over-population to the relation of a railway train to two different kinds of obstacle that may impede its progress. Static over-population corresponds to arrival at the buffers of the final terminus of the line, which may perhaps (let us think of some great trans-continental railway

* In a series of articles in *The Malthusian*, 1916 and 1917. Subsequently published as a pamphlet entitled *The Malthusian Doctrine and its Modern Aspects*.

† Though perhaps not so far off as is sometimes supposed. In 1925 Prof. East calculated that it would happen when there was one person to 2·5 acres on 40% of the earth's surface, which would, he thought, be about one hundred years from now. Quoted from O. W. Wilcox, *Nations Can Live at Home*, 1935, pp. 17 ff.

such as the Trans-Siberian) still be thousands of miles away. Kinetic over-population corresponds to the danger of collision with a slow-moving goods train just ahead of the passenger train, the goods train representing the food supply. It is clear that the danger of overtaking the goods train may be just as great a few miles from the starting-point as a few miles from the end of the journey, and that the effects of the collision would be none the less severe for the fact that in front of the goods train the line runs on to the distant terminal a whole continent's breadth away. Nor does it much matter at what absolute speeds the trains are running; it is the difference between their speeds that is of chief importance, which indicates that, even though the supply of necessaries is actually increasing rapidly, there may still be danger of over-population if the population is tending to increase more rapidly still.

The second "refutation" differs from the first in that it calls attention not to the ultimate potentialities of the earth, but rather to the fact that we are not making the fullest and best use of those potentialities that are more immediately within our grasp. It is pointed out—often with great justice—that our methods of production are antiquated and our methods of distribution inefficient and unfair. Improve these, it is said, and there will be plenty for all. Doubtless there would be, if the "all" in question were those who are here to-day. But improvement in production and distribution, rectification of economic injustice, etc., all take time; and during this time the number of those to be fed and otherwise provided for is also likely to increase. In any case, improvements in the future cannot abolish any short-

age that exists to-day, and even as regards the future itself there is little hope of alleviation unless it can be shown that these improvements will provide an increase of the necessaries of life that is proportionately greater than the probable increase of this life itself.

The third "refutation," which is much more to the point than the other two (based as these are on obvious confusions), endeavours to show that the necessary improvement has already taken place. Triumphantly it directs our attention to the indubitable fact that, taking into consideration the last one hundred and fifty years or so, many countries have shown themselves capable of supporting not only much larger populations than they formerly possessed, but of supporting them in greater comfort than that enjoyed by the smaller populations of the past. In explanation of this fact it reminds us that every individual brings with him into the world not only a mouth but a pair of hands, and that in large-scale work (work carried on by many in providing for the needs of many) the law of diminishing returns, on which the followers of Malthus had laid much stress, gives place to a law of increasing returns, in virtue of which the work of each new pair of hands is more, rather than less, productive than that of the preceding pair. It is admitted that, in the absence of improvement in agriculture, the former rather than the latter law holds generally as regards the products of the land, inasmuch as the more accessible or the more fertile land is naturally cultivated first, and only when, through increasing numbers, this proves insufficient, is recourse made to soil that is more distant or less productive. It

is held, however, that the progressive application of scientific methods to agriculture can and does entirely, or to a large extent, neutralize this tendency; while as regards manufactured goods the cost of both production and distribution tends almost from the start to diminish relatively as larger quantities are involved—as we all know from the familiar fact that we can often purchase larger quantities at a relatively lower price. Here a way is indicated in which over-population might be overcome, a way in which any possible increase of population might be provided for—perhaps indeed in steadily increasing comfort. But to show that this might be done does not show that it has been done. The supply of necessaries might have been increasing so as to admit of a larger population living at the same level as before; it might even have been increasing at a faster rate than that at which the population has been increasing, so that a larger population is living at a higher level than before (this actually seems to have been the case in most western countries); but this in itself does not necessarily mean that the pressure of population on the means of subsistence has as yet actually been abolished, though if the process is continued long enough this will eventually happen.

Most Malthusians, though they admit the improvement (i.e., the reduction of population pressure), are sceptical as to whether the pressure has as yet actually been abolished, except perhaps in a few of the economically most favoured countries. It is not an altogether easy matter to say whether a country is over-populated or not. The best test, it might seem, is to be found in a comparison of the numbers to be provided for with the amount of necessaries

available; or, failing this (if the necessary statistics are not at our command), the mere presence or absence of starvation or under-nourishment on an appreciable scale might seem to be a rough but sufficiently reliable indication. Actually there are very few countries in which some degree of under-nourishment is not to be found in some sections of the population, while in quite a number the standard of life is miserably low for a large proportion of the inhabitants, and recurrent widespread famines indicate that for many the threat of actual starvation is never very distant. Of course, this does not mean that further increase of population in these countries will not be possible, or even desirable, if the supply of necessaries can be adequately increased. But it indicates that, as things are, with existing deficiencies of production and distribution, the supply is insufficient.

The Relation between Birth Rates and Death Rates

Starvation, under-nourishment, and poverty lead to early death, and a high death rate is therefore also an indication of over-population. Early death, however, may obviously be due to causes other than starvation, and for this reason a clearer sign of over-population may be afforded by the relation between the birth rate and the death rate of a country over a number of years. Indeed, according to the Malthusian principle, if there is pressure of population on the means of subsistence, we should certainly expect a close relation between these two rates. Imagine for a moment a small island, uninhabited and isolated from the rest of the world, on which certain persons from a torpedoed vessel have taken

refuge. The immediately available resources of the island may be such that it can support in relative comfort a small number of shipwrecked mariners. If more than this number seek its shores, the amount available for each declines; general under-nourishment prevails and the weakly begin to die off. If fresh survivors from further shipwrecked vessels constantly arrive, the rate of dying off will be rapid; indeed, it will be more or less in proportion to the number of the new arrivals. Now the conditions of a larger, more developed, and still developing country, one moreover that is in trade relations with other parts of the world, are of course more complicated than those of our imaginary island. Still, by and large, they are the same; and if, following the old simile of Lucretius, we compare the new-born children of the country to our shipwrecked mariners, we can see that the larger this stream of new arrivals, the higher must be the death rate in the country concerned. If the sustenance available remains constant, only a certain number can be supported, and any attempt to raise this number by a higher birth rate can only result in a higher death rate; while, correspondingly, a reduction in the birth rate would make possible a decline in the death rate. If the sustenance available is not constant but is increasing (though still insufficient to meet the pressure of population), the same general tendency will be discernible, but the birth rate will be higher than the death rate by an amount that corresponds approximately to the increased number that can be supplied year by year.*

* The correspondence will only be approximate, since each equal increment of food will not necessarily produce a pro-

This latter is, of course, the condition that has actually held of most western countries during the nineteenth century—a period of unprecedented expansion both of available food supplies and population. On examining the birth rates and death rates of those countries for which adequate statistics are available, we find exactly the correspondence between the two rates that we should expect if Malthus's principle were in operation. Roughly we can say that up to about 1876 the birth rates of most European countries were stationary or slowly increasing, while the death rates followed them (at an interval allowing for a very considerable increase of population). From about that date onwards both birth rates and death rates have declined. Thus in England and Wales in 1853, 1876, and 1930 the birth rates were 33·2, 36·2, and 16·5 per thousand respectively, while the death rates were 22·8, 20·8,* 12·1. If we follow the rates year by year for all western countries and plot them as graphs † we obtain a remarkable series of curves, the death rate curves following the birth rate curves in their fall (and also in their previous

portional increase in the duration of life. A (quantitatively or qualitatively) inadequate diet—especially when the inadequacy is not extreme—may result in impaired health or reduced energy rather than in early death. In a complex society, matters of distribution and of hygiene, in so far as they bear on dietetic inadequacy, have also to be taken into consideration. The varying incidence of infectious disease also of course affects the death rate. Nevertheless, vital statistics seem to indicate that the correspondence in question holds to a far greater extent than might perhaps at first have been expected.

* Actually the lowest for the preceding period since 1853 (when accurate records began to be kept). As indicated in the previous footnote, owing to epidemics and other causes death rates are nearly always more variable than birth rates.

† This has been done in C. V. Drysdale's pamphlet referred to above.

rise when present), thus constituting an impressive piece of evidence in favour of the Malthusian position. The only hopeful method of interpreting the facts otherwise than as a result of the operation of Malthus's principle would be to show that the rises and falls which correspond so remarkably are really due to independent and unconnected agencies. What can have caused the fall in the birth rate and death rate? As regards the first it is pretty generally agreed that in most cases it is due largely or almost entirely to voluntary restriction of parenthood by means of contraception (though in a few countries other factors have also been important, as in Ireland where, as Carr Saunders has shown, later marriage would seem to have been a deciding influence). In 1876 there took place a remarkable trial in which Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were prosecuted for publishing a pamphlet dealing with the subject. The trial attracted an immense amount of attention (the accused had deliberately broken the law from what they held to be the highest moral motives), and the pamphlet in question (*The Fruits of Philosophy*, by Charles Knowlton), which had been in existence for many years, began to circulate in far larger quantities and was translated into many languages. Shortly afterwards the Malthusian League was founded to defend the Malthusian doctrine and the right to advocate birth control, though the active members in this movement mostly (and correctly) called themselves Neo-Malthusians, inasmuch as contraception was not a method of dealing with the population problem that was considered by Malthus himself (who would, indeed, presumably have included it in his category of " vice ").

As regards the fall of the death rate only three explanations have been seriously proposed: (1) the one we have already mentioned—i.e., the reduction of deaths consequent on the reduced pressure of population on the means of subsistence due to the decline of the birth rate; * (2) a reduction in the death rate as a natural consequence of a change in the age distribution of the population—relatively fewer deaths will occur if there is a diminution in the relative numbers of the very young and very old, who constitute the sections of the population most liable to death; (3) a reduction in consequence of the advance of medicine and hygiene.

The second of these factors is a significant one in certain cases and one that was unduly neglected by earlier writers. In many European countries there is a larger proportion of middle-aged people than formerly, and this will assist the fall of the death rate, while in some " new " countries recruitment of the population by immigrants (most of whom are young or middle-aged and strong) will have the same effect. But any lengthening of the average

* Of course a decline in the death rate might occur, according to the Malthusian principle, independently of a decline in the birth rate, if for any reason the available food supply were steadily increasing. In the actually available data, however, which refer only to recent times, there are few if any clear indications of this having occurred, as during the period of declining death rates the birth rate has nearly always also been declining. Nevertheless an improvement in the food supply may (and perhaps occasionally does) manifest itself: (1) in a decline in the death rate that is more rapid than that in the birth rate, (2) in a declining or stationary death rate accompanying a rise in the birth rate. In every case, according to the Malthusian principle, changes in the amount of the food supply would be reflected in the rate of natural increase (or decrease)—i.e., in the difference between the birth rate and the death rate, whatever the actual values of these rates may be.

life attributable to this factor is in general far too small to account for the immense decline in the death rate that has been taking place in so many countries over a long period of years.

The most immediately obvious and striking of the factors is the third. The progress in medical science and the health services has been very real and has undoubtedly kept alive many people who would formerly have died at a relatively early age. At first sight it might indeed seem that here we have an all-sufficient explanation. Nevertheless, it fails to account for the remarkably close correspondence between the birth rates and the death rates that actually exists—e.g., for such facts as the following: (1) the death rate in many countries began to fall only when the birth rate also started falling, (2) in countries where the birth rate has not fallen the death rate also has not fallen, and (3) in Japan, in spite of her rapid westernization, the death rate was actually rising, together with the birth rate, till 1923, when both started falling (as happened in most European countries at an earlier date); whereas these are all facts that are strictly in harmony with the Malthusian explanation. In agreement also with this explanation is the further very significant fact that the only exceptions to the general rule of the close correspondence between birth rate and death rate are provided by a few prosperous countries where the death rate has for long been exceptionally low, where the standard of living is known to be high, and where poverty in the sense of an actual shortage of necessities is almost absent. In Australia and New Zealand, for example, the birth rate has fallen very greatly in the last eighty years or so, with but

a very small corresponding fall in the death rate, which was, however, exceptionally low from the very start, indicating that these countries did *not* suffer from the pressure of population which so generally existed elsewhere. It would appear that the Malthusian principle affords the only satisfactory explanation of the remarkable correspondence between the movements in the birth rates and death rates which is revealed by vital statistics, and that this correspondence affords, indeed, a triumphant vindication of this principle.

In this connection it may be noted finally that the data from birth rates (which were, of course, not available in Malthus's day) have been used to show the general truth of Malthus's principle, as revealing by a *reductio ad absurdum* that the human race could not actually increase at the speed which these rates show to be theoretically possible even under existing social conditions. The highest birth rates recorded—e.g., in some years in Russia and Egypt—are in the neighbourhood of 50 per thousand, the lowest death rates about 10 per thousand. If these rates applied to a single country, the population of that country would increase at a rate of 40 per thousand, or 4% per annum, which would mean a doubling of the population every 17½ years, or a fifty-fold increase in a century. Few even of the greatest enthusiasts for large numbers would contemplate with equanimity the prospect of England and Wales with a population of over 2000 million a century from now. Even if they could be fed (a very optimistic assumption), the amount of elbow room at their disposal would be most uncomfortably limited.

The Changing Attitude towards the Falling Birth Rate

Both in its narrower individual and sexual aspects and in its broader economic and social aspects the control of parenthood through contraception has encountered very varying degrees of approval and disapproval. In a few instances it has met with official encouragement, as when in the middle of the last century the Conseil Municipal of Versailles created a *prix de tempérance*, in allotting which account was to be taken of the *nombre modéré* of the candidates' children, while the Académie Française offered a prize for an essay developing this theme. This was followed a little later, as we have already indicated, by vigorous Neo-Malthusian propaganda on the part of a small minority in this country and by the foundation in some other countries of bodies similar to our Malthusian League.

Much more often, however, there has been condemnation both by Church and State, a condemnation sometimes leading to the imposition of a legal ban on the dissemination of birth control information and (in recent periods) to the creation of special honours, privileges, rewards, or tax reliefs for the parents of large families. Of greater general importance, however, has been the widespread but often more or less inarticulate feeling that the practice is in some way immoral from the point of view of the individual, and anti-social from that of the community. There can be little doubt that this feeling has been shared by many of those who in such increasing numbers resorted to the practice, which recommended itself for the benefits it brought to

them as individuals or as families, but which involved them in an apparent conflict between the demands of more immediate prudence and the wider moral claims of society.

With the loosening of so many taboos and conventions and the wave of sexual freedom that followed World War I, the more personal and moral objections against birth control lost much of their strength; indeed, it began to seem that Neo-Malthusianism had definitely triumphed and was well on the way to becoming recognized as one of the characteristics of a civilized society. In the early thirties, however, the opponents of birth control once more became vocal, this time chiefly on the social and economic side. In the fascist countries a high birth rate was regarded as a sign of the vitality, "virility," and aggressive energy of the nation, while in other countries (particularly in Great Britain and France) it was argued that a declining birth rate was an indication of national decadence, and gloomy pictures began to be drawn of the fall in national power and prestige that would follow from it and of the economic dislocation—if not indeed disaster—that it would entail. It was pointed out, truly enough, that the great technical and economic progress of the nineteenth century had been made in a period of unexampled increase of world population. It seems, however, to have been less often realized that this increase was the consequence rather than the cause of scientific development and economic expansion, and that world conditions (even allowing for the continued progress of technical achievement) might not allow of an indefinite continuance of such increase. Few attempts seem to have been made to show that any

threatened reduction in the increase of population (or any threatened absolute decrease of population) in any given country would be of such an order as seriously to reduce the operation of the law of increasing returns in the spheres of production to which this law applies, while on the other hand little or no attention was paid to the possible advantages of a decline in the birth rate of those countries that were admittedly overcrowded. There were, in fact, clear signs of panic in the agitation, a panic that corresponded in the democratic countries to the blustering and population-boosting of the fascist States.*

The Modern Statistical Approach

The chief weapon of the alarmists, however, was to be found in certain new and in themselves highly valuable refinements of statistical analysis. Principally owing to the work of Kuczynski, the use of crude birth and death rates began to be abandoned in favour of the specific fertility rate and the net reproduction rate. The fertility rate distributes the total births among the mothers of various ages, while the net reproduction rate takes account also of the female

* In at least two respects, however, those who expressed these fears obviously had some justice on their side. In the first place the correspondence between birth rates and death rates (according to which the fall in the birth rate is compensated by the fall in the death rate) cannot go on for ever. The death rate cannot be reduced indefinitely and therefore sooner or later the time must come when a further decline in the birth rate must inevitably result, first in a smaller increase in population and then, if continued long enough, in an absolute decrease. In the second place, the fall in the death rate has generally as a matter of fact not completely kept pace with the fall in the birth rate, so that (in this and many other countries—though by no means in all) the net increase has been growing gradually smaller.

children born to mothers of each age who die before themselves reaching this age, thus showing how far the females of each fertile age group (usually calculated according to five-year periods between the ages of 15 and 45) are tending to replace themselves.* A net reproduction rate of 1 would indicate that, in this vital respect of women of child-bearing age, the population is just replacing itself, while any fraction below unity would show that it is failing to do so. The study of such data shows that, though the population as a whole is for the moment still increasing, it is doing so at the cost of an increase in the relative number of the older people in the community; owing to the fall in the birth rate, combined with increasing longevity, the proportion of children to adults (and especially to older adults) is distinctly smaller than in earlier generations. Moreover, the net reproduction rate shows that the women of reproductive age are not fully replacing themselves—i.e., are not producing female children at such a rate that, allowing for the chances of early death, the next female generation of the 15–45's will be as large as the present one. If this goes on, each successive generation of women capable of bearing children will be smaller than the preceding one, so that, unless their fertility increases, the population will inevitably decline; and if fertility, far from increasing, goes on declining, the fall in population will soon become quite rapid. Indeed, some alarming estimates were made according to which a maximum for England and Wales of 40½ millions would be reached in 1940, with subsequent

* For a simple illustration of how the net reproduction rate is calculated, see A. M. Carr-Saunders, *World Population*, 1936, p. 121.

catastrophic decline to 31½ millions in 1975 and less than 4½ millions in 2035.*

Actually, however, the more pessimistic of these estimates have already shown themselves to be false. Just about the time that they were made an unexpected thing happened; the birth rate, which had been falling steadily for over fifty years, ceased to fall and has even shown signs of rising; and calculations based upon more recent figures are thus far less perturbing. A White Paper published in 1942 † indicated that with an annual total number of births of 700,000 (about the present figure) the population of this country could remain indefinitely at the present level. Owing to the above-mentioned decline in the number of women of child-bearing age this would admittedly mean a small increase in fertility, but even at the present fertility rate it was calculated that the population (in this case of Great Britain) in 1971 would be somewhere between 44,500,000 and 47,600,000. From the point of view of national happiness and national economics—i.e., apart from considerations of relative national power and prestige —few reasonable people would regard such an estimate as giving ground for any immediate great alarm.

International Aspects

When we look at the international situation, however, it does appear that we must be prepared for very considerable changes, which we should do well to contemplate carefully in anticipation in order to avoid the panic in which they might otherwise

* Enid Charles, *The Menace of Under-Population*, 1936.

† *Current Trend of Population in Great Britain*, H.M. Stationery Office, 1942.

population in these parts of the continent as compared with that of the west, where there is likely to be little further increase or where—as already indicated—there may soon even be a decline. According to the important recent estimates of Notestein and his collaborators of the Office of Population Research, Princeton University,* by 1970 the population of southern and eastern Europe will be about five-sixths of that of north-western and central Europe, instead of two-thirds, as it is at present. The country with the largest possibilities of increase is, however, the U.S.S.R. According to the same estimates, the Soviet Union is likely to increase its population by no less than seventy millions in the thirty years between 1940 and 1970—an increase which alone exceeds the whole present or prospective population of Germany. Assuming that the "western" tendencies to reduced fertility and mortality continue, all these parts of the world—viz., north-western and central Europe, southern and eastern Europe, and the U.S.S.R.—will eventually obtain a maximum population within the present century; but whereas the first of these parts is already at a point very near this maximum, the second part will not attain it till 1970 or soon after, a date at which the population of the U.S.S.R. will still be increasing. If these estimates are at all correct, it seems clear that the western countries, which have for the last two centuries and more been the spear-head of European culture, must resign themselves to a relative decrease in influence, power, and prestige, in so far as these depend on numbers. If, as appears to be the case,

* F. W. Notestein *et al.*, *The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union.* League of Nations, Geneva, 1944.

most modern nations are "touchy" on this point and are liable to suffer from anxiety and feelings of inferiority at the very thought of any reduction in their numbers or fertility, it would seem wise that they should begin now at once to consider the implications of these prospective changes. Anxiety and inferiority feelings are only too likely to breed war and aggression, while on the other hand a dim sense of population pressure and an envy of those who do not suffer from this pressure and who possess what may appear to be an undue share of the world's land and wealth may very easily lead the more rapidly growing populations to turn with greedy eyes and grasping hands towards the regions inhabited by the more comfortably off. Here we have all the ingredients for the making of bloody future conflicts. If we are to prevent them, we must face the prospective population problems of the world frankly and courageously, and this in turn we can do only when we have freed ourselves from the internal psychological conflicts connected with the subject of population. Hence the necessity for further serious consideration of the psychological aspects of population problems; hence also the justification for the present attempt to draw attention to the nature of the psychological factors involved.

CHAPTER II

WHY MALTHUS IS SO HARD TO SWALLOW

The Fundamental Conflict

WE may start our psychological considerations from the fact, already noted, that Malthus's principle points to the existence of a fundamental conflict between our two greatest needs—hunger and love; between the biological tendencies or instincts subserving preservation of the individual on the one hand and preservation of the species on the other. In the human race, as with all living beings, these two tendencies are delicately balanced and it is difficult to say which of them is primary. The individual must of course exist before he can procreate, but as soon as he has fulfilled his procreative and parental functions, his existence is no longer necessary so far as the continuance of the species is concerned. Nevertheless, in all higher species at least, he does continue to exist (often for a considerable time); and as we contemplate the whole scale of living beings in the light of evolution it would appear that, generally speaking, the higher the species the less does its survival depend on mere rapid reproduction and the greater becomes the importance of individual development and of the increased power of adaptation which this development implies. This is the general principle which Herbert Spencer, the great nineteenth-century philosopher of evolution, called " the antagonism between individuation and

genesis." Man represents the summit of the evolutionary scale, and in man, if anywhere, we might expect that a cautious regard for individual well-being and development would prevail over a reckless indulgence in "philoprogenitiveness." Indeed, if men were really endowed with the cold selfishness and calculating rationality which some philosophical and economic doctrines would attribute to them (such doctrines as imply that human behaviour is strictly determined by expectation of pleasure or profit) we might have expected that the Malthusian view, especially in its Neo-Malthusian form, would have been eagerly adopted and acted on. Even in its classical form Malthusianism might have recommended itself, inasmuch as to enlightened egoism sexual restraint might have seemed preferable to the alternative of poverty and early death, while Neo-Malthusianism provided a means whereby, at the cost of a trifling outlay and a little trouble, all the advantages of a smaller fertility might be obtained without the sacrifice of sexual pleasure.

That men have not in fact lived up to this standard of rational egoism is to be explained easily enough up to a certain point. In general men are neither as egoistic nor as reasonable as these over-simplified theories of human nature would make out; * as modern psychology has amply shown, they are in many of their thoughts, desires, and actions eminently

* Though these theories, such as the doctrine of "economic man," may of course have a certain justification for studying the effects that might be expected to occur on certain simplified assumptions (thus rendering difficult economic and social problems more manageable), so long as the limitations imposed by these assumptions are firmly kept in mind. This, however, is a matter which does not concern us here.

unreasonable creatures, swayed by motives which they themselves in their calmer moments can often recognize to be contrary to their self-interest, and of the deep roots of which they may, indeed, often be completely unaware. More specifically, we can see that the disadvantages accruing from sexual recklessness are not experienced immediately but will be felt only in the somewhat distant future, thus making some considerable demand upon intelligence and foresight if they are to be avoided, while on the other hand sexual desire is strong and clamours urgently for immediate satisfaction—and is, indeed, according to traditional morality, entitled to such satisfaction, provided it be sought within the marriage bond.

Such obvious considerations, however, carry us only a little way. They reveal only that common lack of prudence and self-control that so often prevents men from living up to those standards that they themselves acknowledge to be desirable from the point of view of personal or social interest; they show merely that common triumph of impulse over reason and restraint which moral teachers have so constantly deplored. They do not explain the deep moral and intellectual discomfort that seems so often aroused by the mere thought of the Malthusian principle itself and that is probably responsible for those signs of conflict connected with the subject to which we have alluded. We have here not just a failure to live in accordance with a standard that is morally or intellectually recognized, such as occurs in the case of the ordinary rules of honesty, truthfulness, chastity, or thrift. We have to do rather, so it would appear, with some fundamental emotional resistance against the Malthusian principle itself, which makes it hard to stomach, difficult to bear

in mind, and all too liable to suffer from the distortion or oblivion that the distaste for it engenders. It is the nature and causes of this deeper resistance that constitute the difficult but important problem for us here.

Implicit Recognition of Malthusianism

Let us begin by noting that men have often behaved as though they had some dim understanding of Malthus's principle, long before and quite independently of the full formulation of the principle by Malthus himself. Immensely varied as have been the marriage customs of the world, they have all in practice borne some relation to the stern necessities of economics. Marriage, with its formalities, its privileges, and responsibilities (different as these have been at different times and places), in itself imposes a great restraint on the free exercise of the reproductive powers of mankind. Often, relatively late marriage—several or even many years after puberty—is the rule, the recognized qualification depending on some sign of competence (ranging in the case of the husband from the possession of a "steady job" to proficiency in head hunting). Where polygamy is permitted, it is usually in practice limited to those husbands who are in a position to bear the economic strain; and when it occurs it probably results in a smaller general fertility than does monogamy with its more even distribution of sexual privileges. Furthermore, among many primitive peoples there are more or less regular periodic taboos on intercourse within marriage itself, especially important and widespread being those following childbirth or during lactation (which latter is sometimes very prolonged). Added to these measures tending to reduce the num-

ber of conceptions, we find also frequent resort to abortion and infanticide, which can be regarded merely as clumsy, cruel, and inelegant methods of achieving the results more conveniently obtained by contraception. Finally there is the satisfaction of the sexual impulse by methods that do not lead to reproduction, the so-called "perversions," homosexuality, and auto-erotic practices of every kind. All these measures taken together constitute the "preventive" check on population, which Malthus regarded as the only alternative to the "positive" check provided by starvation, disease, war, and the other violent and destructive agencies encountered in what the evolutionist writers subsequently called "the struggle for existence." In the greatly enlarged second edition of his *Essay* it was Malthus's aim to show in detail that in every country either the "preventive" or the "positive" check prevailed and that they were inversely related to one another. He employed the years between the two editions (1798–1803) in travel and study devoted to this purpose, much as Darwin devoted himself before the publication of *The Origin of Species* to the collection of evidence in support of his great doctrine of evolution.

In the exercise of these restraints, of these "preventive" checks, men have thus behaved as though they had some implicit or half-conscious awareness of the tendency of population to outgrow the means of subsistence, as though in fact they sought by such restraints to avoid the still greater sufferings inevitably associated with the "positive" checks which constitute the only possible alternative. We can, indeed, perhaps say that the practice of these restraints is the way in which Spencer's great law of "the antagonism be-

tween individuation and genesis" manifests itself at the human level, where conscious foresight (here as in the other processes of adaptation) begins to take the place of the cruder and blinder biological processes hitherto involved. Going a step further, we can see that certain additional facts fit in well with this general point of view. In the first place, the fact that, as is revealed by modern statistics, it is the more advanced countries which in recent times have availed themselves most eagerly of contraceptive devices and other preventive measures to reduce their birth rates; and secondly, that within these countries it was on the whole among the more cultured classes and those enjoying a higher standard of life that the birth rate was first to fall and with whom it has fallen most.* In the third place we can see that the full conscious recognition of a general principle, such as that which Malthus first enunciated, is itself a great advance on mere vague intuition or selfish *ad hoc* adjustment to individual circumstances as they arise. Malthus's great contribution to human welfare and progress lies, indeed, in the achievement of this step. Its full consequences, however, will be apparent only when yet another step is made, one that consists in the general and explicit recognition of the implications of Malthus's principle for the moral, social, economic and political problems of humanity at large. This last step is one that has still to be taken. It is in the hope of

* It is, of course, easy to point to numerous detailed influences which have led to this greater family restriction among the cultured and the well-to-do, but I believe it could be shown that most of these are merely the natural manifestations and accompaniments of "individuation" in our present culture. This, of course, does not necessarily imply that they are all healthy and desirable or that they are incapable of change.

hastening its occurrence, by pointing out the nature of certain obstacles of a psychological character that must first be overcome, that the present small volume has been written.

Sexual restraints and taboos, we have implied, may be looked upon as an aspect or manifestation at the human level of the general biological antagonism between individuation and genesis. But we must freely admit that in the establishment and maintenance of the great majority of sexual taboos there has been, and still is, but the dimmest recognition of the connection between the rate of reproduction and the pressure of population upon the resources available to a community. The detailed origin of sexual taboos, in their myriad manifestations throughout the world, is still largely a matter of surmise. In many cases their real basis—biological, social, psychological, historical—will probably never be fully understood. All we can say is that, if we are searching for some deep common cause for sexual taboos in general, Spencer's principle of the antagonism between individuation and genesis certainly deserves to be taken very seriously into account, inasmuch as the restrictions on sexual activity imposed by the taboos both reduce the population pressure, and thus render the individual life more ample and secure, and at the same time direct the mental energies away from the sexual sphere, thus aiding the development of those cultural interests and activities that we call "sublimations." What we are, however, undoubtedly justified in asserting, and what is of much greater immediate importance to us here, is that this general sex taboo (which in one form or another is a feature of all human society and which is certainly not least developed in

our western culture), together with the psychological conflicts around sex which it engenders, plays a big part in the somewhat strange and ambivalent attitude that humanity has adopted towards Malthus's principle.

Resistance Arising from the Sex Taboo

A taboo, however, as Wundt, Freud, Frazer, and other eminent students of the subject have pointed out, implies a double attitude—an attitude of disgust or prohibition overlying one of attraction and desire; for men do not trouble to prohibit actions that nobody is tempted to perform. A strong taboo therefore implies a strong desire (even though this may sometimes be an unconscious one). Now an interesting fact about Malthusianism is that the resistance to it appears to spring from two sources: from the sexual taboo itself and from the underlying sexual urge—both, in their different ways, providing motives for the rejection or neglect of the principle in question. In what follows we shall endeavour to justify this statement; but we may note at once that this twofold source of the resistance (from both the negative and the positive attitudes to sex), if it is indeed a fact, does something to explain the strangely paradoxical treatment of Malthus's principle to which we have already drawn attention.

At once most loudly vocal and easiest to understand are the objections that spring from the negative attitude towards sex—i.e., from the prevalent sexual taboos, the high moral and religious estimation of sexual abstinence, and the corresponding sexual inhibitions of the individual. It is the actual practice of contraception that is the main object of disapproval

from this source, but since contraception leads to a reduction of the birth rate and is in Neo-Malthusian theory and propaganda closely associated with the principle of Malthus, the objection extends very often to this principle itself. In those with foresight and a sense of moral responsibility the fear of impregnation is undeniably a powerful deterrent of sexual intercourse when pregnancy is not desired. It is therefore a strong motive operating in support of the conventional sexual restrictions and taboos. Contraception (in so far as it can be relied upon) abolishes this deterrent, and thus threatens to deprive conventional sex morality of one of its most effective practical supports. Whatever may be its ultimate biological justification in terms of Spencer's above-mentioned principle, the whole structure of our system of sexual taboos (like that of other taboo systems) is built psychologically upon tradition, supernatural sanction, anxiety and superstition, rather than on any reasonable foundation; it can therefore ill afford to lose so powerful and realistic a sanction as is to be found in the fear of impregnation. No wonder, then, that contraception causes alarm and arouses protest among all the more ardent upholders of conventional sex morality, who fear in particular that it is likely to lead to a great increase in extra-marital intercourse. No wonder that they have sought to hush up all discussion of the " wicked " devices, to illegalize any display or advertisement of them, to prevent their transport through the post, and generally to make it as difficult as possible to obtain them or any knowledge of them. No wonder finally that, when in more recent years alarm spreads concerning the possible reduction of population through the use of

birth control, the "religious" and "moral" forces are very willing to join with the "patriotic" and "racial" forces in condemnation of the practice.

The (classical) Malthusian, we may note, would be in whole-hearted agreement with the traditional moralist as regards the undesirability of widespread promiscuous intercourse without birth control, but the ground of his disapproval would be different. The Malthusian would disapprove because of the threat of increased births; the moralist would object to extra-marital intercourse as such. Furthermore, the Malthusian might condemn (as Malthus himself did) large numbers of children being born even in marriage (and might therefore, like Malthus, approve of late marriage), whereas the moralist—in our present culture as distinct from that of certain primitive societies—sees no objection to high fertility, provided it has the sanction of marriage.

Between the Neo-Malthusian and the traditional moralist the conflict becomes much more acute. For not only does the Neo-Malthusian advocate, instead of late marriage, the use of contraceptives by married couples whenever the size of their family threatens to outgrow its economic resources, but, *qua* Neo-Malthusian, he would in addition see nothing particularly wrong in extra-marital intercourse, provided it did not result in pregnancy. It is not surprising, then, that in its modern guise the whole Malthusian doctrine seems to be dangerously revolutionary and subversive.

But there is another and rather more specific objection to Neo-Malthusianism. Sexual intercourse, according to the traditional view, always involved some lapse from moral purity. Unfortunately there could be no doubt that intercourse was necessary for

procreation. Since things were so ordered, the traditional view had—as it seemed, regrettably but none the less inexorably—to be so modified as to permit of sexual intercourse for this purpose, but for this purpose only. By a further step, however, it could always be argued that, as long as procreation was possible, the end justified the means, and what might seem to be a moral lapse was therefore justified or mitigated. But contraceptive intercourse by its very nature shamelessly proclaimed the fact that it was being carried out, not for the biological purpose of procreation, but for mere selfish satisfaction or lust, thus undoubtedly falling into the category of sin or vice.

This view is one that has often been clearly stated and vigorously maintained. Behind it is another idea, seldom openly avowed, because it springs from the cruder and more primitive levels of moral thinking —viz., the notion that the birth of children, especially illegitimate children, constitutes in some way a natural and rightful " punishment " for sexual indulgence, exposing as it does the " shame " of those concerned, and imposing pain, anxiety, and responsibility to balance the sensual and perhaps illicit pleasures that have been enjoyed. The use of contraceptives enables the transgressors to avoid these " natural " penalties. If the wicked can thus sin and " get away with it," what do the pure and chaste enjoy in return for their greater virtue?

From this point of view it is as natural to condemn contraceptives as it would be to condemn a device that removed the dangers and penalties attaching to theft, forgery, or murder. The notion of punishment as a natural, desirable, and justifiable consequence of sin is one which is very deeply rooted in the human

mind, and as long as sexual indulgence is looked upon as sinful there will, in accordance with the dictates of primitive morality, be a demand that it should be " punished "; and as long as undesired pregnancy appears, even though but dimly or unconsciously, to be such a punishment—one decreed moreover by Nature herself—so long also will it seem that to avoid this punishment by the use of contraceptives is to outwit and defy Nature, to commit that kind of crime which the ancient Greeks called Hubris, a crime which, it is felt, will surely bring down upon humanity the wrath of God or Nature.* The attitude here is very similar to that which looks askance at the removal of those other " natural " penalties of sex—the pains of childbirth and venereal disease. The use of anæsthetics in childbirth and of prophylactics against venereal infection have both encountered (and in the case of the latter still encounter) vigorous opposition—an opposition that springs from the sense of primitive moral discomfort which tends always to accompany any attempt to lighten or abolish punishment; and the use of contraceptives arouses much the same feelings, though perhaps somewhat milder in degree and of a less explicit kind.

One last objection under this head may be mentioned here. Even among those who are devoid of any detectable " moral " feeling on the subject, there may yet be a certain distaste for contraceptive methods on the ground that they are crude or " unæsthetic." Now, sexual intercourse, we may venture to suggest, always is to some extent crude and unæsthetic. In

* A treatment of this theme in its more general implications will be found in the present writer's *Man, Morals, and Society*, 1945.

this it resembles other fundamental biological functions; the realm of the æsthetic is definitely removed from that of the basic bodily needs. That is why, in spite of a few able advocates of the contrary view, gastronomy is seldom admitted to be an art comparable, say, to painting, music, literature, the drama, or even (in spite of its utilitarian aspects) architecture; and although the so-called "art of love" (like the art of dining) may involve subtle and refined procedures quite different from those of simple lust (or gluttony), the act of copulation itself (like that of eating) can never be "æsthetic" or "beautiful," in any proper meaning of these terms. Since contraceptives are needed only for actual copulation, which by its very nature seems to fall outside the sphere of the beautiful, the complaint that their use is unæsthetic is beside the point and is surely based on some confusion. What in all probability is really meant is that contraception involves forethought and deliberation; its use implies that there is a definite intention of having intercourse, and this cold, calculating element arouses sexual resistance which can often be by-passed if love starts "innocently," tenderly, or coyly, and the lovers find themselves, as it were without their conscious complicity, impelled to indulge finally in the supreme act of sex affection. One can sympathize with such an attitude, but the fact remains that it is to some extent unrealistic and based on sexual inhibition.* That

* We do not find it necessary, in the interests of delicacy, to "toy" with our food before starting to consume it, though it is true that the rituals of dining in some way appear to modify the grossness of feeding in much the same manner as "the art of love" seems to lessen the crudity of copulation. (Children, however, do often combine play and eating in a way that tends to irritate their elders—a fact the implications of which would be interesting to follow up if they were relevant.)

is why we have mentioned it at this point. So far as its conscious content is concerned, however, it differs from the preceding objections in that the complaint is not so much that it facilitates sexual pleasure as that it interferes with it. It therefore forms a convenient transition to our next category—the objections that spring from the positive aspects of the sexual impulse rather than from the taboos and inhibitions that affect this impulse.

Resistance Arising from the Sexual Impulse

The Malthusian principle in its classical form entailed as its practical corollary a serious restraint on the impulses of sex. Since interference with any strong impulse naturally evokes anger and aggression (a matter upon which for once all psychologists would seem to agree), we might expect that great opposition would be forthcoming from this source. Actually there have been very few protests of this kind that are in any way comparable to the loud accusations of immorality with which we have been dealing. That indignation on this account has so seldom been directly expressed is itself eloquent of the great strength of the general sexual taboos, which seem to have rendered any open protest too difficult or unrespectable. It seems as though men were already too resigned to the inevitability of sexual restriction, too inured to hearing of the immorality of sex, to be greatly disturbed by this new demonstration of the evils apparently due to excessive sexual indulgence and of the consequent new appeal for the restraint involved in late marriage as advocated by Malthus.

In the later doctrine of Neo-Malthusianism the frustration of sex was of course largely circumvented

(except for those sensitive souls who found contraception unæsthetic), so that the field was left clear for objections emanating from the opposite, the "moral," camp. Indeed, it might seem that there was no longer any ground at all for complaint on the score of sexual frustration. Nevertheless, I believe it is true that objections from this source are not really absent, though we must seek them, not in the shape of direct attack, but disguised in more subtle and less easily recognizable forms; the emotion, it would appear, is displaced from concern with the individual to concern with the group or race, and it is the implied need for reduced group or race fertility, rather than the threat to individual satisfaction, that arouses protest and indignation.

To understand how this strange transformation has come about we must, I think, take account of two fundamental human tendencies. In the first place we often seek to express through group action or group feeling desires that we dare not express on behalf of purely personal or selfish aims. The savageries of mob action, in which all the usual moral inhibitions of aggression are suddenly discarded, afford one example; the crude egoism of nations, which dispenses with the restraints usually placed on individual pride or self-seeking, provides another. Again, as Anna Freud has pointed out, many people feel able to demand money or help on behalf of some social cause in a manner that would seem to them crude and almost indecent were the begging for themselves. In just such a way as this, men can and do resent any restrictions on the fertility of their group or race, when they would be ashamed to protest against restrictions on their own sexual freedom.

The Castration Complex

In the second place it would seem that the Malthusian demand for a restriction of fertility often arouses that widespread fear of damage to the sexual organs or impairment of their function that psychoanalysts have called the "castration complex." There can be no doubt of the deep power and widespread incidence of this complex; indeed, like the even more famous "inferiority complex" (with which it is not altogether unrelated), it would seem to be in some degree almost universal. It is too deep, too primitive, too repressed an anxiety to find, as a rule, open and direct avowal, but manifests itself for the most part in symbolic and displaced ways. Nevertheless, it is always (again like the inferiority complex) ready to be "touched off" by an appropriate threat; and in the minds of many people Malthusianism, with its demand for a restricted fertility, is just such a threat. In *The Shape of Things to Come* H. G. Wells described the consternation caused by the invention, during the imaginary wars there recounted, of a poison gas that sterilized the reproductive organs without inflicting any other noticeable damage. In a similar way, though in lesser degree, Malthusianism appears, in the light of the castration complex, to be aiming at nothing less than the castration of the race. In its displaced form as projected on to the race, all the latent anxiety connected with the castration complex can find expression in indignant repudiation of any such seemingly outrageous doctrine.

Civilized man's attitude to his sexual impulses and organs is curiously ambivalent. On the one hand—as in traditional Christian morality and in asceticism

generally—they are looked upon as a source of impurity and sin, treated with contempt, and subjected to the sternest measures of control. On the other hand they are also a source of pride and pleasure, something intimately connected with our sense of power, dignity, and self-esteem, something the loss of which would wound us very deeply and make us appear, both to ourselves and others, as little better than objects of pity or of ridicule. This second or more positive attitude is no doubt the more primitive, " natural," and " lower " one, and, as psycho-analysis has shown, it persists in strength beneath the crust of repressive respectability. It is revealed in the phallic religious cults of antiquity and of the East (the rediscovery of which was so shocking to nineteenth-century Puritanism, according to which religion stood for something entirely opposite in character); as also in the widespread use of sexual symbolism, to the existence of which psycho-analysis opened the eyes of a startled world. It is revealed too in the complex meanings we attach to such words as "potency" and " virility," which indicate well the subconscious tendency to equate sexual capacity with power and ability in general. In virtue of this equation, not only the specifically sexual capacity but the whole individuality may be felt to suffer an affront, a threat, or an " emasculation " at the idea of a curtailment of fertility. In this way the castration complex is actually linked with the inferiority complex with reference both to the individual himself and to the displacement of individual feelings on to the group, nation, state, or race. Hence: on the one hand, the pride in large numbers and a high birth rate, as reflecting unconsciously the individual's self-exteem;

and, on the other hand, the uncomfortable feeling of insecurity, amounting sometimes almost to panic, at the thought of a decreasing birth rate, a decline in national population, or even a reduction in the rate of increase in the population.

We have of course no desire to minimize the real importance of numbers; as recent events have shown, it is only the large nations (we should more properly say, only the large industrial nations—a very important qualification) that have real political and military power. Nor should we be justified in regarding the displacement of self-feelings on to groups or nations as necessarily undesirable or pathological; on the contrary, this is probably a process of great importance in social and group life, though, like other comparable processes of displacement, it is capable of taking a healthy and useful, or a pathological and dangerous, form. But in the case under consideration there are certain unrealistic or neurotic features which show that the castration complex, here as in its more individual manifestations, is one that, through the irrational anxiety aroused, produces distortions and a lack of proportion and perspective against which we should be well advised to be on our guard, because of their sinister repercussions in the economic and political spheres.

Chief among the features calculated to arouse our suspicion of a " neurotic " element in the concern over the decline in the birth rate is the fact that, under the dramatic name of " race suicide " (the term, I believe, was Theodore Roosevelt's), this concern began to be manifested at a time when the population of nearly all western nations (France and Ireland being the only conspicuous exceptions) was still rapidly increasing, a

time which itself coincided with the closing years of a period of quite unprecedented expansion of world population. Compared with our relative complacency and short-sightedness over many other evils (poverty, disease, recurrent famines, unemployment, gangsterdom, the threat and then the actuality of world war, and in recent times the outrageous number of casualties on our roads), this alarm over a danger which would become serious, if at all, only in a somewhat remote future is, to put it mildly, not a little surprising.

A more sinister feature—one, however, that we may be tempted to regard as " criminal " rather than " neurotic "—is the deliberate attempt on the part of certain governments to encourage a higher birth rate in order to provide a reason and excuse for war. It is admitted, and even emphasized, by such governments that their countries are overcrowded and that a rise in the birth rate will make them more overcrowded still. Nevertheless, with cynical indifference to the miseries both of economic pressure and of war, they continue to urge their peoples to make great procreative efforts in order to justify their claim for further *Lebensraum*—thus behaving rather like a man who fattens or pads himself deliberately in order to claim a larger space in a crowded vehicle. This attitude is obviously one which presents a very serious threat to any attempt to bring about a more prosperous and peaceful world order. We shall return to it a little later when we come to deal with international problems. For the moment we need only note that it is an attitude which depends largely on just this identification of strength with fertility that we are discussing. To minds dominated by such an attitude

the decline in the birth rate that constitutes so marked a feature of modern civilization is a sign of decadence and weakness, whereas an increasing birth rate signifies healthy, aggressive vitality—exactly the same kind of identification as that implied in the use of the terms " virility " and " potency " in reference to the individual. To such minds the Spencerian principle of the antagonism between individuation and genesis is meaningless; they are more impressed by the example of the rabbit and the rat, and they fail altogether to appreciate that the progress of mankind depends on the high development of individual skill, knowledge, and capacity, rather than on mere numbers struggling for the necessities of life. Such may be the result of the tragic obsession with the importance of numbers and fertility—a result which indicates that the castration complex (at any rate in some of its wider manifestations, such as that here under consideration) is very far from being of purely " academic " or medical interest, a mere curiosity of psycho-analytical and psycho-pathological literature.

Moreover it must not be supposed that the influences in question are confined to fascist or imperialistically aggressive countries. While the latter in their hectic demand for bigger populations show " compensation " or " reaction formation " against " castration " fears, coupled with accent on aggression, in other countries the consequence is, rather, one of straightforward anxiety, panic, resignation, or hopelessness. Some such attitude as this seems to have been operative in France, before and in the early months of the war, and was indeed deliberately exploited by Pétain by way of explanation or excuse for France's rapid downfall under the German

onslaught. A similar attitude of panic or depression may easily develop in Great Britain and other western countries also—a possibility which again reveals the importance of our present subject.

A further example of neurotically tainted thinking (ultimately in all probability from the same source) is displayed in the economic sphere when gloomy pictures are drawn of the economic dislocation likely to be caused by a declining or even by a stationary population. It seems often to be forgotten that stationary or very slowly increasing populations have been the general rule throughout world history until the beginning of the industrial revolution. Undue stress is laid too on the importance of the market provided by mere numbers. Semi-starving and poverty-stricken multitudes actually afford only the most miserable of markets. What is important economically is not physiological or psychological demand, but "effective" demand—i.e., demand on the part of those who are in a position to give something in return; a smaller number of more prosperous people, themselves making full use of their capacities, might easily provide a better market than a far larger number living at the bare limits of subsistence.*

Still another source of alarm (not unconnected with the last mentioned) has been the realization in recent years of the increasing proportion of older people in the population. Such an increasing proportion of the elderly is an inevitable accompaniment of a declining death rate (unless counterbalanced by a corresponding rise in the birth rate) and was easily to be foreseen.

* Incidentally, in such discussions reference is seldom made to Ireland, which has a much smaller population than it had a century ago and yet enjoys a much increased prosperity.

Indeed, a long life is usually considered desirable from the individual point of view, if it is reasonably happy and prosperous, and from the social standpoint it must also be admitted that, except perhaps for a few who have attained extreme old age, elderly people contribute more to the community and make fewer demands on it than do young children in the first few years of life. It is a remarkable fact that in the recent " total " war, in which by general agreement national survival had to take precedence over all other considerations, no single voice from any of the belligerent nations was raised to suggest that there should be a reduction or cessation of child-bearing during hostilities. And yet such a proposal would have been only logical for a " total " war, if it was to be a short one of at most a few years' duration ; for every young child inevitably makes demands on supplies, time, and effort, which could otherwise have been devoted to the making of munitions or other services directly connected with the war. From the point of view of immediate war needs children are a luxury ; and the nation that curtailed this luxury would have enjoyed an economic advantage over others which did not. That no one ventured to make such a proposal, that anyone who had done so would almost certainly have been " howled down " with cries of execration in the democratic countries and summarily disposed of in the fascist ones, and that actually both the prevalent feeling and the official attitude were in the opposite direction—these are all further signs of the kind of irrational alarm to which we are referring. Fertility was mentally associated with strength, in a way that had actually a negative rather than a positive relation to the pressing needs of the moment.

Yet one more indication of emotionally determined unrealism of the same kind is the relative lack of interest in the death rate (not to speak of immigration and emigration) as compared with the concern felt in connection with the birth rate. In many countries, over long periods, the fall in the death rate has been almost, sometimes (as in Holland) quite, as spectacular as that in the birth rate. This fall in the death rate represents something which is considered generally desirable; it means that people are living longer and that death-dealing agencies—malnutrition, disease, unhealthy living conditions, unhygienic habits, or whatever they may be—are being overcome. Here is something of which any nation might justifiably feel proud, something which it might reasonably claim as a sign of its progressing civilization. And yet singularly little satisfaction seems to have been aroused by this remarkable phenomenon; usually it receives little more than passing notice, as mitigating to some extent the " evil " of a declining birth rate. While the latter is deplored as a sign of decadence or " race suicide," the former is seldom hailed, as it deserves to be, as a sign of well-being, health, and strength. Even in France, where the low birth rate is often looked upon as nothing less than a national calamity and where rewards (for the most part ineffectual) have been offered to the parents of *familles nombreuses*, there has been very little concern over the death rate, which was rather unusually high compared with that of countries enjoying similar cultural conditions, and little serious investigation into the problem of how far it is merely a natural consequence of a higher proportion of aged people than is found elsewhere, or is due to other, and preventable, causes.

Still less has there been any adequate curiosity about the remarkable parallelism between birth rates and death rates and its cause. This, as we have tried to show, leads us straight back to the Malthusian position and the problem of making suitable provision for the coming children without detriment to those already in existence—a problem that is brushed aside as of no consequence by the great majority of those who clamour for more births (except in the case of those who say or imply that this provision must be made through war). Few would be so reckless or inhospitable as to invite a large company to dinner without first ascertaining whether their larders are, or can be, adequately stocked and that there will be comfortable room for all the guests. Yet, when it is a question of inviting more guests in the shape of children (who incidentally are not in a position to refuse the invitation), the same precautions on a national scale are considered quite superfluous. The position thus adopted is rendered even more strange and illogical by the fact that, in the case of immigrants, most countries have now for a good many years been devoting considerable thought to the problem as to whether the new arrivals can be properly accommodated within the framework of the country's existing economic resources. Admittedly the problem of unemployment, which has been so acute in recent pre-war years, plays a large part in the latter case. Children do not at once require employment, but they do require food, clothing, and many other necessaries, and they will eventually want work also; so that, regarded as a long-term proposition, the cases are not different. Nevertheless, it would seem that our magical and unrealistic ways of thought concerning birth and fertility make us blind to

possible difficulties that are all too evident in other settings.

"*Bountiful Nature*"

This last consideration leads us naturally to some further sources of resistance to the Malthusian principle. With regard to the relation between births and food we tend to adopt an attitude akin to that implied in such sayings or injunctions as "Bountiful Nature," "Take no thought for the morrow," "God never sends mouths but He sends food"—an attitude in striking contrast to that which we adopt in relation to personal guests or immigrants. All such sayings are, of course, in direct opposition to the Malthusian principle, and seem to indicate the existence in human beings of an attitude fundamentally antagonistic to any clear recognition of the facts behind the principle. Two elements can perhaps be distinguished in such wishful thinking, though at bottom they are not easy to separate and are undoubtedly connected. The one is a continuation into adult life (and projected on to the race) of the feeling of infantile "omnipotence" to which psychoanalysts have drawn attention: that same feeling, which some of us have pretty constantly and nearly all of us have sometimes, that certain calamities or accidents, which we recognize as sinister possibilities threatening others, just do not and cannot affect us; that *we*, for some reason which is not exactly clear but is none the less cogent, bear a charmed life that exempts us from their influence. Moreover, when projected on to a group with which we have identified ourselves—our family, our school, our town, our nation, the feeling in question makes us consider that

this group must enjoy a similar privilege; and since our vanity, like certain other attitudes (as in the case of aggression that we considered above), can be more freely expressed in relation to a group than in relation to ourselves, where modesty usually curtails its cruder manifestations, the group is usually thought to enjoy this peculiar immunity in virtue of its special merits or some special dispensation. In its widest extension this feeling may apply to the whole human race, to *homo sapiens* (note the name, so agreeably titillating to our self-esteem) as distinct from other animals. It would seem to be some such attitude as this which often makes it difficult to realize that man may be subject to the same biological laws as the rest of creation. Though it is true that primitive men, like children also, are relatively humble in this respect and are willing and even eager to recognize their kinship with the brutes and generally to regard themselves as no more than one particular kind of the many sorts of living beings, civilized man has often been shamelessly (one is even inclined to say, magnificently) egocentric, attributing to himself an altogether unique position and significance in the universe. As Freud has indicated in a famous passage, science has delivered a series of blows which have been very disturbing to this arrogant complacency, three of these blows being so severe that they have caused what the psychopathologist might call a " narcissistic trauma " (the trauma here affecting the self-esteem of all humanity). These were made by Copernicus, when he showed that the earth, " the home of mankind," was not the centre of the physical universe; by Darwin, when he shattered the belief in a special act of creation implying that man was God's great masterpiece, in which He

took a peculiar pride and interest; and by Freud himself, when he disclosed the painful truth that man was not even master in his own inner citadel, the human mind, large parts of which were not subject to his conscious guidance and control. Of these three great shocks to man's egotism it is of course the second which is of importance here. In so far as man believes that he has a nature, origin, and destiny altogether different from those of the "lower animals," he is naturally inclined to deny the existence of biological laws that apply to him no less than to other living things; and even if, faced with overwhelming evidence, he has formally (though reluctantly) to admit that some such laws do appear to exist, he will yet tend, implicitly if not explicitly, to regard himself as somehow for the most part outside the sphere of their operation. It may be that we have here one of the chief reasons for the strange paradox that we noted at the beginning of this book, to wit that, while Darwin's doctrine of evolution has in its general features long met with acceptance, Malthus's principle of population, which was the historical and logical foundation of Darwin's doctrine, is still neglected, disputed, or misunderstood. Darwin's views were disconcerting enough in their way, and the last rearguard actions of the conflict they aroused are indeed still being fought in certain odd corners of the world. But Darwin's thesis had one feature that may have made it slightly more acceptable than Malthus's. It was wide in scope and explicitly embraced all forms of life; man was involved in it only as it were by implication, inasmuch as he had obviously to be included among the many varieties of living beings—a very disagreeable implication but of a kind to which, when once formally admitted,

it was often possible to close one's eyes, especially as the " missing link " between man and the nearest related species was not easy to discover. Even the great protagonists of evolution were sometimes concerned (of course quite rightly) to show the differences as well as the resemblances between human life and that of other animals, as when T. H. Huxley suggested that it is the task of ethics to combat and supplant the processes of evolution, crude in form and " red in tooth and claw," which prevailed in the lower creation. Malthus's principle, however, was narrower both in scope and application. It dealt with only one factor in the evolutionary process—viz., the struggle for existence arising from the failure of Nature to provide sustenance commensurate with the reproductive powers of living organisms—the other great factors, such as variation and heredity, being left for Darwin to discover and apply; and it treated this factor far more specifically in relation to man, who throughout the *Essay* occupies the centre of the stage. It was man himself who was shown to be suffering from this great outrage on the part of Nature. More even than our ignorance of human destiny (a matter which is disconcerting only to the philosophically minded), this subjection of man to a cruel biological incompatibility between reproductive power and the actual possibilities of life might tempt men to cry out with Omar Khayyam:—

> Another and another Cup to drown
> The Memory of this Impertinence.

As psycho-analysis has shown, it is possible to achieve oblivion by other means than wine; and it seems all too probable that, because of its offence to human

self-esteem, Malthus's principle has been the victim of those unconscious or semi-conscious tendencies to neglect or forgetfulness to which Freud in his doctrine of " repression " was the first to draw attention. It is so much more pleasant to contemplate " the bounties of Nature " (bounties perhaps expressly placed upon the earth for purposes of human need or delectation) than to think that man, like all the other animals, has throughout his history had to struggle painfully and often unsuccessfully for his share of a niggardly supply.

If this first element in the " Bountiful Nature " attitude springs from a persistence into adult life of infantile " omnipotence," the second and connected element arises from a continuation of infantile dependence on the parents. Actually, in our early years we depend so entirely on our parents or other adults that without their care we should none of us survive more than a few brief hours or days. We learn to expect them to protect us and provide for us, and our illusion of " omnipotence " can be preserved only inasmuch as they usually answer our appeals for help—from our infantile cries onwards. In a complex civilization some remnants of this illusion can often be retained owing to the fact that, as regards the fulfilment of so many of our needs, " unseen hands have been at work," building our homes, making our clothes, providing and preparing our food, and so on, in an almost endless variety of ways. Nevertheless, as we grow up we learn to our displeasure that this care and protection is strictly limited, and that in many matters of importance we are ultimately dependent on our own efforts. But we are loth to abandon the notion of the all-wise, all-powerful pro-

tecting and providing parent figure, and we continue to seek him in a variety of guises—sometimes in purely human shape, as in a dictator who in his wisdom and power will solve our difficulties and overcome our dangers, sometimes in a God in heaven who looks down in kindliness upon His children here on earth and (if they follow His commands) will cherish them and provide for their necessities. It is from such an attitude that there springs the notion that " God never sends mouths but He sends food." The Malthusian principle, especially when supplemented by the Darwinian doctrine of evolution, cuts at the very roots of any such idea of divine protection and provision. It reveals a grim picture of a world in which throughout the ages the majority of living things conceived or born are doomed to perish early in their lives from lack of sustenance or from the manifold other perils that beset their course, paramount among which is the danger of being eaten by other combatants in the struggle for existence—a world which, far from reflecting the presence of a kindly, helpful parent, would seem rather to exhibit an utter cruelty or callousness in the Creator, if there is one; and furthermore (supreme horror) it shows that man himself has no reason to suppose that he is exempt from the laws that govern this nightmarish creation. We can hardly be astonished that man seeks by all means in his power to escape this shattering blow to his delightful illusion, that he feels there *must* be something wrong with the Malthusian principle, that somehow, somewhere, the food and other necessaries *must* be available, and that Providence or " Bountiful Nature " cannot thus have forsaken him, the darling of God's nursery.

Hence the relief felt at the realization that, especially in industrial society, there are factors that appear to work against the Malthusian principle, inasmuch as in many kinds of manufacture and distribution the law of increasing returns holds good rather than the law of decreasing returns on which the Malthusian economists had laid such stress; and in this relief it is often forgotten that, as regards most of the raw materials for industry, the latter rather than the former law is operative. Apart from the benefits of large-scale farming, it is the gloomier law which holds, above all, in agriculture, the most basic of all industries, so that it would be very rash to assume that with the advent of the industrial era the Malthusian bogey has been fully exorcized. Realizing that agriculture is the weakest spot in their rosier view, those who feel that Malthusianism simply must be wrong make from time to time desperate efforts to demonstrate the vast progress of which agriculture or " agronomy " is capable, to show that, with the application of modern scientific principles, the soil can produce far more than, with the relatively primitive methods hitherto in use, has seemed to be the case. Notable among such efforts was that of Kropotkin in his famous book *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, and more recently that of O. W. Wilcox in his attempt to show that " *Nations Can Live at Home*" (and therefore have no excuse for demanding fresh *Lebensraum* as long as their own land is not fully exploited by the new methods now available). One can only hope that these cheerful visions of the future may be justified, but—apart from the technical questions involved, into which it is not proposed to enter here—the optimists who seek to evade the Malthusian bogey in this way are dealing

with possible future developments and not with actual conditions at the moment. Those who place their trust in such hopes are therefore only too liable to become guilty of the second of the three false "refutations" of the Malthusian principle of which we spoke in the first chapter—the view that this principle is of no account because to-morrow, with proper utilization of our knowledge and resources, there will be ample to feed everybody. Meanwhile to-day the scarcity persists, and when to-morrow comes there may be further mouths to feed. Nevertheless the writers of this school seem to have such confidence in their scientific reinstatement of the "Bountiful Nature" doctrine that they seldom, if ever, consider it necessary to suggest that it might be well if some countries applied a gentle brake to their population increase at the same time as they apply new methods to their land. The attitude adopted by these enthusiasts of plenty resembles that of a kind-hearted but perhaps over-optimistic host who, having been promised a good supply of victuals, puts a notice outside his house, "Come to dinner to-morrow; all are welcome," without considering whether, in view of the hazards of delivery, the stocks at his disposal may not perhaps still be insufficient to provide an adequate repast for the large company which his generous and inclusive invitation might attract.

Another method of preserving the "Bountiful Nature" attitude is of course exemplified by the first of the three "refutations" to which we have referred. With the help of the false assumption that the Malthusian principle will come into operation only when the earth is completely populated and all its resources are being utilized to the full, it is supposed

that the evil day in which the principle must be seriously considered can be indefinitely postponed; meanwhile a fool's paradise can be enjoyed through the contemplation of the great tracts of land that are not fully peopled and the vast natural resources not yet exploited—and it is conveniently forgotten that the present generation cannot enjoy the produce of this land or make use of these resources. It is probably this attitude, more than any other, that is responsible for the quite astonishing difficulty so often found in realizing that the Malthusian principle is concerned not with any absolute quantities but with the ratio between population and food supply, and consequently also for the frequent (but in itself ridiculous) confusion between what on an earlier page we called static and kinetic over-population. Since without this distinction there can be no proper understanding whatsoever of the Malthusian position, the sinister influence of such an attitude on all our thinking with regard to population problems can hardly be exaggerated.

Human Scapegoats

Still another method of evading the implications of the Malthusian principle, one that is no less prevalent and perhaps even more tragic in its consequences, is, while preserving the " Bountiful Nature " illusion, to put all the blame for actual shortages on our fellow men. According to this view, Nature has lavishly provided for all her children, but her generous intentions have been frustrated by the incompetence and (especially) the selfishness of certain sections or groups of humanity who have unjustly and callously helped themselves to far more than their fair share. There are two chief

forms of this view. In the first the blame is laid mainly on some social, professional, or economic class —e.g., the "capitalists" who are the scapegoats of communist invective. In the second some particular race or nation is regarded as the guilty party. The latter form is of course of special importance as a potential cause of war, and we shall return to it in this connection.

The important fact that usually escapes notice here is that the accusations of incompetence, selfishness, and unequal distribution may all be true, but that this does not of itself invalidate Malthus's principle. In this respect shortage through incompetence or unjust distribution is exactly like any other shortage. It is true that if there had not been incompetence and maldistribution more necessaries would at the moment be available, so that a population of the present size would be better off. But in the absence of an adequate "preventive check" population would not be of the present size; it would be larger just in proportion to the reduction of the "positive check" brought about by the better utilization of resources and the more equitable distribution. The result, therefore, would be not an improvement in the economic condition of a population of the present size, but a larger population living in much the same condition as the present one.

If, on the other hand, we accept the fact of past incompetence and maldistribution and the consequent fact that the supplies at present available are smaller than they might have been, and if we set about now to improve matters—then we still need to remember that this improvement will take time; the development of better methods in agriculture and industry and arrangements for more equitable distribution cannot

be brought about in a day. And during this time of readjustment the population will also, in the absence of "preventive checks," tend to increase in proportion as our readjustment is successful, so that we shall eventually be confronted with a larger population living generally on the same scale as the present smaller one; we shall have increased numbers and reduced inequalities, but we shall not have increased prosperity.

In both cases—i.e., whether we consider what might be now if things had been better ordered in the past, or what may be in the future if we set about improving them now—our false optimism arises from considering only the changes in production and not the changes in population over a given period. The error is just as elementary as would be that of a nation which, when embarking on a war, contemplated with complacent satisfaction the increased power it would have in a year's time after mobilization of all its fighting forces, and compared this increased power with the *present* fighting forces of its adversary, quite failing to take into account the probability that during the year the enemy will also be mobilizing his resources. Such is the quite amazing neglect of reality factors in which wishful thinking on these matters may involve us. The apparent disproof of the Malthusian principle and the laying of all blame for existing shortages on the scapegoat of human incompetence and selfishness are achieved only by leaving out of consideration altogether one of the two factors—viz., the growth of population—which the Malthusian principle brings into relation with one another.

But, it may perhaps be asked, need we really, as regards all aspects of the case, take account of any long period of time? In our own society, as in many

others both past and present, we can see manifest injustice: a few people, living in large houses, enjoying every amenity that human labour, art, and knowledge can provide, eating and drinking their fill (perhaps, indeed, more than is good for them), while others live in crowded squalor, with insufficient food and clothing, amid every kind of inconvenience and discomfort. Could not this (by forcible expropriation, or even by generous impulse if our society were a truly Christian one) be set right almost in the twinkling of an eye? Could not the choice and ample foods, the varied, costly clothes, and the large, luxurious mansions of the rich be put at once at the disposal of the hungry, the ill clad, and the poorly housed? Of course they could (if our society were willing to take the necessary drastic measures), and of course they would produce some immediate alleviation. But this immediate alleviation would be less than might be optimistically supposed. In the first place, as has often been pointed out, the rich are far less numerous than the poor, and an equal distribution would go but a little way towards satisfying the requirements of the latter. In the second place, most of the expenditure of the rich goes to the purchase of luxuries rather than necessities (the multi-millionaire can actually eat little more than other men); luxuries such as a Rolls Royce car, a yacht, or an Old Master cannot at once be turned into the things the poor require to alleviate their distress, and the same, of course, is true of the rich man's bank balance and his investments at home and abroad. In the third place, the dislocations and disturbances involved in any immediate confiscation or equalization of property are bound to be considerable, and would of themselves (even granted good will and

reasonableness on all sides—a very unlikely event) in all probability largely counteract, or more than counteract, the immediate benefits accruing to the poorer sections of the population.*

But—and this is the real point of importance for us here—any immediate benefit will not be permanent unless at the same time "preventive checks" to the growth of population are applied. In the history of humanity it has sometimes happened that, for one reason or another (sometimes the reason has been a disaster, such as a great epidemic which has destroyed large sections of the population), there has been a sudden period of relative plenty and abundance.† But such periods have nearly always been short, because before many years have passed population has increased (owing to the reduction of the "positive checks") and has caught up with the available supplies,

* It would be interesting in this connection to study the economic consequences, immediate and remote, of the large-scale confiscations that have actually occurred—e.g., the dispossession of the monasteries under Henry VIII, that of the Court and aristocracy in the French Revolution, as well as the more recent and vaster experiment in Russia. This, however, would clearly take us beyond our present theme, though it is, I think, obvious that the immediate effects in alleviating the poverty of large sections of the population were very limited. A more equal distribution of *income*, such as—under the stimulus of war—has taken place in this country through the combined efforts of steeply graded taxation, rationing, and general employment, may on the other hand have very beneficial effects, which soon become apparent. But (as is indicated in the next paragraph) even this does not in any way help us to evade the Malthusian principle. If the extreme enthusiasts for a high birth rate had their way, the benefits we have undoubtedly derived from the more equal distribution of incomes would soon be wiped out. Relative equality might persist; but it would be equality in poverty.

† The years immediately following the Black Death (1348–9) constituted such a period in England. For a recent treatment of this subject see G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, 1944, early chapters.

so that the customary process of pressure on the means of subsistence once again begins. So it would be also in the case we are considering, unless the " preventive check " were brought into operation. Here, once more then, it is merely short-sighted optimism to neglect the factor of population increase. In whatever way we look at it, the rectification of human incompetence and injustice affords no satisfactory escape from the principle of Malthus, and to throw all the blame on the stupidity or avarice of our fellow men (however stupid and avaricious they may actually be) merely increases human strife and bitterness without providing any real escape from the stern biological realities to which Malthus drew attention.

Very similar considerations apply to the other prevalent form of the contention that shortage is due not to any biological tendency but to the incompetence and selfishness of men—i.e., the view that certain nations or races possess an undue share of the earth's surface and its produce. The facts complained of are no less clear—perhaps even clearer—than in the case of classes or sections of the population within a given country; but no more in this case than in that of class differences do these facts in any way support the " Bountiful Nature " theory or invalidate the principle of population. It is very true that, through their enterprise, aggression, or good fortune, certain relatively small sections of the human race possess large, rich, and fertile tracts of land. It is true also that in many cases they are failing to make the utmost use of this land, that with their relatively low birth rates and small populations they are enjoying a relatively high standard of living from it as it is, and that they are at the same time excluding or rigorously

limiting immigration from other countries with high birth rates, dense populations, and lower standards of living. Such an apparently dog-in-the-manger attitude is certainly calculated to arouse envy and animosity on the part of the less fortunately situated races and nations, who find themselves in a position like that of disgruntled travellers in an overcrowded third-class railway compartment who are enviously aware that their fellow-travellers in a neighbouring first-class compartment are making the journey in far greater ease and comfort. In recent years we have seen something of the difficulties and problems of this latter situation, and if we are wise we shall apply the lessons to be learned from them to the vaster problem of overcrowded and undercrowded countries. In the next chapter we shall deal with some of the ethical and psychological questions involved. Here we need only note that, much as in the case of an attempted equalization of resources within a single country: (*a*) in so far as it is feasible it would produce some immediate alleviation of distress, but that (*b*) the process would be likely to involve extensive dislocation and chaos (both economic and social), which would in practice considerably offset this alleviation by compensating disadvantages; (*c*) the full utilization of a country's resources takes time, during which—in the absence of some "preventive check"—population also would be growing; (*d*) the alleviation produced in the originally overcrowded countries would—again in the absence of "preventive checks"—soon be counteracted by a rapid growth of population, so that the final result would be that much the same number of people would be living in the same unsatisfactory conditions as before (here our analogy with the third- and first-

class carriages tends to break down; it would hold good only if the knowledge that the first-class carriages were being put at the disposal of third-class travellers were of itself to attract a larger number of such travellers); (*e*) if the immigrants continued to display their customary fertility it would be only a question of time before the hitherto undercrowded countries of immigration were just as over-populated as the original overcrowded countries which the emigrants had left.

From psycho-analytic evidence it would seem likely that, as in the case of many other social attitudes, the resentment aroused by " real " political, racial, or economic factors is apt to be reinforced by certain unconscious influences emanating from deep infantile complexes. In this particular case (i.e., the idea that the beneficence of Nature is frustrated by human greed and interference) there are two such complexes which may easily be operative: the well-known Œdipus complex and that sometimes referred to as the Cain complex. The Œdipus complex is connected with the feeling of the young boy that his father is a rival, competing with him (with an unfair advantage owing to his age and power) for his mother's love and care. In the absence of the father this love and care would, he feels, be all his own, but owing to the claims of the father on the mother he is to a large extent deprived of what he would otherwise enjoy. (In the girl the situation is somewhat more complicated in that her attitude is at first the same as that of the boy, though she later tends to regard her mother as the rival for the affection of her father.) The Cain complex is connected with the same sort of rivalry, but this time between siblings. Many children feel that on the arrival of a later-born brother or sister

they no longer enjoy the degree of parental love and attention that they had before; they are, as it were, ousted by the newcomer and thus deprived of their heritage.

As with other deep complexes, the feelings aroused by the original childish situations can be displaced on to various persons and situations occurring in later life, including situations of a social, political, or economic kind. In the present case it is the persisting infantile notion of the all-kind, all-providing parent (especially the mother) which corresponds to the idea of " Bountiful Nature," while the privileged social class or nation that has got possession of more than its fair share of the world and its goods (the earth, as the psycho-analysts have often pointed out, is frequently a mother symbol—i.e., is unconsciously identified with the mother) represents the intruding parent or sibling. In this way very natural jealousies, envies, and resentments arising from the unequal possession of natural resources as experienced in adult life may be augmented by emotional influences dating from a distant and forgotten past, and (what is of more importance to us here) the corresponding tendencies to denial of the Malthusian principle and substitution of a human scapegoat may be thereby intensified.

In the resistances to Malthusianism that we have been describing (irrespective of whether they spring primarily from real, social, and adult situations, or from displaced affects derived from childhood complexes), a double attitude is clearly discernible. There is on the one hand a deep love and trust of God or Nature (a good parent figure who will surely provide for his or her children in their need), and on the

other a hatred and envy of those who have graspingly possessed themselves of far more than was their due and in this way have frustrated God's or Nature's beneficent intentions. In this double attitude the driving power may come from either side. On the one hand, as we have seen, there may be a great unwillingness to relinquish the notion of a kindly all-providing God or Nature, and a corresponding readiness to lay all blame on human culprits. But on the other hand we must not lose sight of the fact—more sinister in its implications regarding human nature—that the hatred and hostility towards fellow beings may have acquired a self-sufficient driving force of their own, with the result that men may also be unwilling to recognize the Malthusian principle because they fear it may deprive them of a reason for their hate. The doctrine of Malthus does, in fact, remove much of the sting from the accusations of economic or political injustice, for it shows that—in the absence of a restraint on reproduction—there would be economic misery in any case. When a thief has robbed us we are apt to feel less bitterly against him if we realize that, unless we had taken certain precautions which in fact we did not take, we should anyhow have lost our goods or money. So it is with Malthusianism, which reveals that an unjust distribution of the necessities of life in general tends only to reduce the number of the living rather than to reduce the standard at which they live. When we have once committed ourselves to hatred of an enemy or oppressor, the more things we can accuse him of the greater is our satisfaction, and any evidence that seems to reduce the measure of his guilt is apt to be unwelcome; when we are at war, for instance,

we feel that it is disappointing, indeed almost unpatriotic, to report that any disaster—e.g., a fire—is due to natural causes or our own negligence rather than to enemy action.

We have, indeed, an inveterate tendency to look for human sources of our troubles. The savage is only too ready to believe that death, disaster, and disease are the result of hostile and malicious magic rather than of agencies unconnected with, and outside the control of, men; and this primitive tendency has been all too well preserved in our traditions of politics and war. It is only science, with its insistence on natural (rather than animistic) causes, that has firmly set its face in the opposite direction. Now Malthus's law, like any other scientific principle, points to the operation of natural causes, in this case of fundamental biological tendencies, and reveals human greed and wickedness as of only secondary significance in the causation of economic distress. To this extent it "queers the pitch" of political agitators anxious to fasten all guilt upon their adversaries. Indeed, as we have already noticed, warmongers engage in deliberately fostering over-population in their countries in order to justify aggression; while, so far as "class war" is concerned, some of the strongest opposition to the Malthusian doctrine has come from Socialists or Communists, who have seen in this doctrine a "red herring" distracting men's attention from what appeared to them to be the far more urgent and important need of abolishing the inadequacies and injustices of the capitalist regime. Like the fomenters of international wars, they were even willing that economic misery should be (at any rate temporarily) increased, if only

it would drive men to take more vigorous action against the "oppressor." What the national expansionists and the Socialist reformers alike failed to realize was that neither aggressive war nor socialistic revolution could bring about permanent economic improvement unless they were followed by some measures for reducing any excessiveness in the birth rate, since otherwise the new resources made available would soon be used merely for the maintenance of a larger number living just as precariously as a smaller number did before. In this insistence upon the need for inter-human strife, combined with a strong resistance to any such reduction in the growth of population as might diminish the cause for strife, we see the reluctance with which men abandon the ancient tendency to blame their fellow-beings rather than Nature for the difficulties and misfortunes of the human lot.

Some Unacknowledged Motives

The natural tendency and tradition towards human conflict is, unfortunately, not the only motive which opposes the reduction of economic distress through the practical application of Neo-Malthusianism. There are certain other obscure and unavowed tendencies which are antagonistic to the alleviation of poverty and misery by this or other means. In much the same way as the rabid advocate of national expansion wants plenty of cannon fodder for his wars, and the revolutionary wants plenty of desperate proletarians to man his barricades, so also the employer and industrialist have often wished for plenty of "hands" to work in their fields and factories, and plenty of servants to minister to their

personal needs. The demand for cheap labour, though scarcely one that can be voiced with impunity at the present day, has nevertheless sometimes been a motive determining resistance to the spread of birth control.

Neo-Malthusianism as an ethical and social doctrine aims at the reduction of human suffering, and as such it is bound to meet with opposition from all those curious and obscure mental tendencies which actually find their satisfaction in suffering and which therefore impel men to retain or increase pain and hardship rather than to diminish it. It is hardly our business here to delve into the difficult question of the nature of these tendencies, which are certainly complex in character and are bound up with other fundamental human trends, such as those of sex (e.g., in the case of sadism and masochism), hostility (e.g., in the case of *Schadenfreude*), revenge, punishment, sin, and guilt. It is not incumbent on us to consider these tendencies, because for the most part they are not opposed specifically to Malthusianism as such, but rather to any measures that seem likely to reduce human pain and misery (as shown, for instance, very clearly in the outcry against the use of anæsthetics that followed their introduction towards the middle of the nineteenth century). It is only necessary here to remind ourselves that such tendencies exist, that they are insidious in nature, and that they may sometimes manifest themselves more particularly in resistance to the Malthusian doctrine on some special point. We have, in fact, already come across such an instance in the notion that undesired pregnancy is a " punishment " for sexual indulgence. Another germane example is the stigma of " illegitimacy," and this example illustrates the important fact that

the punishment or suffering in question need not necessarily be endured by the actual culprit, for the illegitimate child on whom the stigma rests is not himself responsible for the irregular sexual indulgence of his parents. There is such a thing as vicarious punishment, where guilt can be to some extent wiped out by the sufferings of persons who are not themselves directly connected with the cause and origin of the guilt. At the back of the human mind is an obscure notion that too much happiness, good luck, or success is somehow displeasing to the powers that rule the universe and is therefore dangerous as likely to invite retribution from these powers—a notion for which, as we have already mentioned, the Greeks used the word Hubris (arrogance or "uppishness"). Hence the vague, but nevertheless sometimes very strong, anxiety that is liable to be aroused by anything which spares humanity the difficulties, pains, or sorrows that seem to be imposed by Nature or to which habit or tradition has accustomed us. Neo-Malthusianism is very definitely an "interference" with Nature of this sort, and it is dimly felt that as such it is wicked or dangerous. More particularly, it aims at the abolition of two main sources of human suffering that have seemed to be decreed by Nature: (1) undesired pregnancy, childbirth, and large families as the natural and inevitable consequences of sexual intercourse; (2) poverty as a natural feature of the human lot. The attempted abolition of these two great sources of suffering (which in the light of the Malthusian doctrine are seen to be intimately linked together) is felt as hubristic, and awakens a sense of moral discomfort which in turn finds expression in the condemnation of Neo-Malthusianism.

The "Superior" Attitude

Apart from the queer, primitive sense of uneasiness at the removal of human suffering, there are still other motives that may sometimes be opposed to such removal and therefore also to Neo-Malthusianism. Some of these motives are more respectable than others. Among the less easily avowed is the pleasure we may feel in being more fortunately placed than other men. In the present case the more fortunate position may be mentally associated with a superiority in virtue—e.g., in not having given way to "the lusts of the flesh"—so that we can pity or despise those whose numerous progeny proclaim their lack of continence; or with a greater worthiness automatically conferred (in a capitalist society) by the possession of worldly goods, so that we can afford to look down with a certain superiority on those whose economic circumstances compel them to live in conditions that arouse in us commiseration mixed with horror or contempt. Neo-Malthusianism and the abolition of poverty tend to deprive the virtuous or the well-to-do of this sense of superiority.

The "Charitable" Attitude

Superiority, however, does not always engender unworthy or socially disruptive motives. It can also give rise to sympathy, tenderness, and the desire to help—an attitude in some respects similar to that of a mother towards her child. At least one psychologist of note, W. McDougall, considers that the "tender emotion" is just the affective aspect of the "parental instinct," an instinct which, like others,

seeks expression and gives rise to a feeling of frustration when it finds no outlet. There is little reason to doubt that those varied activities that we group together under the comprehensive name of "charity" have in the past provided an honourable and useful channel for needs and tendencies of this kind, though it is true that the "tender" feelings involved have often been mixed with less worthy ingredients, such as the pleasure of superiority to which we have just referred (which is usually responsible for giving the word "charity" the offensive ring it often has), as also the need for atoning for a certain amount of guilt which the possession of greater wealth may have engendered. In any case, the threatened removal of the outlet for certain mixed emotions that charity has afforded may perhaps be counted as a not entirely negligible source of resistance to any measures aiming at the abolition of poverty, and therefore also to Malthusianism.

To certain minds of what might perhaps be called a sentimentally generous complexion the Malthusian doctrine seems little less than an outrage upon humane feeling, inasmuch as it appears to stultify all kindly impulse towards economic improvement, and to place men in the grip of an iron biological necessity from which there is no escape and which therefore justifies a resigned or even callous outlook upon economic suffering. It is such a view as this that has engendered the epithet "hard-hearted Malthusianism." It should scarcely be necessary to say, however, that such a reading of the situation is a totally mistaken one. There is nothing in Malthusianism that is essentially opposed to any kind of social or economic reform. All that Malthus or his

followers have maintained is that the effects of such reform tend to be nullified unless account is taken at the same time of the principle of population. Given such account, however, other reforms can bear their full fruit, and will result not in a mere increase of numbers but in an increase of well-being. The Malthusian doctrine certainly justifies no fatalistic resignation in the face of economic distress; but neither is it in itself a panacea for social and economic evils—though it may actually go a good way towards the alleviation of many of them. To take account of it is necessary if we are to achieve social welfare, but in itself it is not sufficient for this purpose. It should rather be looked upon as a first essential step, without which all kindly, generous, "tender," or "parental" impulse can be of no permanent avail, a step, indeed, which opens rather than closes the way to every other method of improvement.

Neo-Malthusianism and the Desire for Children

Our reference to tenderness and the parental instinct brings us to one final point of considerable importance. The practical application of the Malthusian doctrine, whether in its classical or Neo-Malthusian shape, reduces the number of children that are born. In Neo-Malthusianism, moreover, this reduction is effected without any necessary corresponding reduction in sexual intercourse. How far does this diminution in the function of parenthood in itself produce a sense of frustration, and therefore engender opposition to Neo-Malthusian practice—*in itself*, that is as distinct from its connection with the numerous remoter, more indirect, and "displaced" tendencies that we have already considered? We

here find ourselves face to face with a problem to which psychologists have devoted curiously little attention. They are agreed that there is a specific need or desire for sexual satisfaction, which of course normally—i.e., apart from the peculiarly human devices of contraception—leads to the birth of children. They are also agreed that, as with many other of the higher animals, the presence of offspring usually calls forth in greater or less degree appropriate "parental" emotions and behaviour, though in the case of human beings it is not easy to say how much of such emotion and behaviour may be due to instinct and how much to social pressure and tradition. But is there anything in the nature of an instinctive desire for children before they have arrived, comparable for instance to the desire for sexual congress or for food ?

This is perhaps the same thing as to ask: Is there an appetite for children ? In many, perhaps all, of the activities usually classed as instinctive it is possible to distinguish what Drever has called an "appetitive" and a "reactive" element.* The appetitive element has an internal or physiological source and manifests itself independently of the presence of an outer object. Thus we can feel hungry or thirsty as the result of purely organic processes, even if there is nothing to eat or drink in our immediate neighbourhood—though the internally engendered drive will soon send us seeking for suitable objects to satisfy our need. In virtue of the reactive element we not only tend to eat or drink as soon as we have found such objects, but even do so in the absence of any strong appetitive element if we are confronted

* James Drever, *Instinct in Man*, 1917.

with dishes or beverages of sufficiently attractive quality. In fact (as experiment has amply shown) there is a reciprocal relationship between the appetitive and reactive elements of a drive or instinct, of such a kind that if the outer stimuli are very enticing we " react " to them even if the appetitive element is weak, while if this latter element is very strong we " react " to stimuli to which we should otherwise remain indifferent or which would cause repugnance—e.g., desperately thirsty or hungry men will, contrary to their better knowledge or ethical principles, sometimes attempt to drink salt water or resort to cannibalism. This holds very obviously of sex as well as of nutrition. The former, like the latter, instinct clearly has both an appetitive and a reactive element; we may have sexual desire in the absence of a suitable sexual object, though a very attractive sexual object may arouse such desire even though it was not before noticeably present.

What is now the state of affairs as regards the parental instinct ? There is obviously a reactive element; children are fed and protected, loved and cherished, when they have arrived. But is there an appetitive element in virtue of which children are desired by those who are not yet parents ? The question is of importance, because if there is such a desire, and if it requires for its satisfaction anything approaching the full biological reproductivity of human beings, then it must obviously be frustrated alike by the custom of late marriage, as advocated by Malthus, and by early marriage and the use of contraceptives, as recommended by the Neo-Malthusians. The advantage of the latter over the former would be confined to the fact that it did not

call for frustration of the sexual impulses; it would still leave the parental impulses largely ungratified. It was apparently under some such assumption as this that objection was raised against Neo-Malthusian propaganda (which, in so far as it accepted individualism and *laissez faire*, urged that married couples should only have such a number of children as they could reasonably hope to support), on the ground that it sought " to deprive the poor of the joys of parenthood."

Psychologists, as we said, have devoted curiously little attention to this problem, probably because they have failed to realize the importance (particularly here) of the distinction between the " appetitive " and " reactive " elements of an impulse or instinct; and partly also because the former element, if present, is apt to be confused with, overlaid or hidden by, the desire for sexual intercourse, which is the natural biological means to parenthood. The mere fact, however, that they have passed the problem by and that the appetitive element, if present, is difficult to distinguish from the more immediately clamorous desires of sex affords some prima facie evidence for its non-existence; and in a review of the subject a few years ago D. W. Harding * came to the conclusion that there is no biologically determined desire for children as such, and that Nature has, so to speak, staked all in endowing men (like other animals) with a strong urge towards the sexual act. Since this urge assures the act being carried out with sufficient frequency to perpetuate the race, an " appetitive " desire for offspring would indeed be biologically

* " The Conscious Choice of Parenthood," *Science and Society*, 1937, I, p. 122.

superfluous. Sexual instinct, together with a "reactive" parental instinct (leading to love and care of children after they are born), would be sufficient to ensure that the race did not become extinct. It is only man who, through his invention of contraceptive devices, has broken the connection between sex and reproduction by making the former possible without the latter—thus, as it might seem, for the first time creating a biological need for an appetitive element in the parental impulse, i.e., a desire for, as distinct from a love of, children.

This need is actually met, as Harding no doubt rightly suggests, largely through the social factors of tradition and imitation, by the circumstance that it is considered the "right" and natural thing for married couples to have children; partly also perhaps in certain cases by witnessing the actual pride and pleasure of parents in their children or by having one's own tender emotions aroused by the sight of these children, this leading to a desire to have a child or children of one's own. Again, the desire may come about through, or may at least be reinforced by, some of the factors we have ourselves already considered. Among these may be: the displacement of narcissistic tendencies on to existing or potential children (in virtue of this displacement children may be, as Freud has put it, "a part of ourselves," and we often feel their successes and failures as though they were our own), or the association of "strength" or "virility" with fertility or reproductive power. Influences of this kind may, as we have seen, be very powerful and may in certain circumstances, particularly when considered in relation to races or nations, constitute very strong obstacles to the acceptance of

Malthusianism. They may no doubt also exert considerable influence in the same direction even with regard to the individual and his family, especially when traditions are such that parents look forward to economic support from their children in their old age, or where, as in European aristocratic circles, there is pride of family and consequent fear of the family dying out or the family name becoming extinct; or, once again, as in some eastern cultures, when it is considered important to have descendants who will pay a quasi-religious honour to one's name.

All such motives may, in fact, arouse strong opposition to the Malthusian doctrine. But they are all of them indirect or traditional in nature. There would seem to be little or no question of opposition resulting from the direct frustration of an instinct, such as is, for instance, involved in the inhibitions of sexual activity due to late marriage or to the various forms of sexual restriction and taboo. This has no doubt made the adoption of Neo-Malthusian practice far easier than it would otherwise have been, and is of great significance as regards the task of popularizing this practice in countries where this seems desirable but where contraception has hitherto been little used. It is also in agreement with the fact that, whereas the control of the sexual impulse is usually achieved only through a stern struggle (as moralists have emphasized throughout the ages and as psycho-analysis has shown so vividly in recent years), there is little evidence that the control of parenthood by means of contraception involves suppression of any fundamental desire of an instinctive kind; the difficulties and objections aroused by Neo-Malthusianism on this score are not simple,

direct, and biological in nature, but arise from the more complex social, moral, æsthetic, or (displaced) narcissistic sources that we have considered.

Indeed, so far as direct instinctive forces are concerned, the balance would seem to be all in favour of Neo-Malthusianism. If there is no appetitive desire for children (only a reactive tendency to cherish and protect them when they have been born), and if the biological need for procreation is entirely entrusted to the sexual instinct, then an individual should be able to be happy and contented on the instinctive level as long as he can satisfy his sexual needs, even though in sterile form. Neo-Malthusianism, moreover, has much to recommend it from the egoistic as well as from the sexual side. We have to bear in mind that, in virtue of the antagonism between individuation and genesis, the gestation, birth, care, protection, and upbringing of children actually involve, even in the most favourable circumstances, some very considerable curtailment of purely egoistic development, activities, and satisfactions. The care of a family (even if some of the responsibilities, such as those connected with formal education, are taken over by the State or other agencies) inevitably makes big demands on the time, energies, and resources of the parents—particularly of the mother.* This reduction of individuation has to be offset against the "joys of parenthood," and it is not surprising therefore that most parents regard the advent of their children with not altogether unmixed feelings. On the one hand may be the satisfactions associated with the nascent "reactive"

* It has indeed been described as "fourteen years' hard labour."

tendencies to "love" children when they have appeared, together with all the more complex social, moral, and narcissistic elements involved (those same elements which are opposed to Malthusianism); on the other hand there are regrets for the manifold individual joys and freedoms that have to be forgone. Neo-Malthusianism provides a means—we might go further and say a temptation—of avoiding the sacrifices that reproduction necessarily entails.

Herein lies the theoretical justification of those who fear race suicide and who bewail contraception as a method for the encouragement of selfishness. Since the human device of contraception has broken the biological connection between sexual satisfaction and reproduction there is no longer any instinctive mechanism at work to ensure the continuance of the race. But there is really no great cause for alarm in this; almost the whole of human culture and civilization is carried on by processes above the purely instinctive level, and yet culture (though no doubt it may fluctuate in degree and vary greatly in quality) shows no real signs of dying out. Contraception merely transfers reproduction from the biological to the cultural sphere, and although (like certain other features of culture) it has created a danger to the continuance of the race, there is as yet no indication that this danger is of a very serious nature.*

An examination of the evidence before us, especially perhaps the cessation of the long-continued fall in

* The indications at the moment of writing make it seem more probable that, owing to the lag of social wisdom behind technical achievement, the human race will within a century or two commit suicide through the use of improved "scientific" weapons (physical, chemical, or biological—e.g., disease germs) in warfare than as a consequence of a mass refusal of parenthood.

the birth rate in this country, hardly justifies the jeremiads that have been uttered on this subject. Actually at the present moment, in most countries of the world, the perils and distresses arising from over-population would to a realistic mind far outweigh the remoter dangers incidental to a declining birth rate. Even in the absence of an instinctive urge for the procreation of children, the tradition of "founding" or maintaining a family, imitation of those who already have children, national or racial loyalties arising from identification with a group, together with the various other factors opposing Malthusianism that we have passed in review, seem amply strong enough to ensure perpetuation of the species until such time as we are in possession of sufficient knowledge, and are sufficiently free from prejudices, to envisage the whole problem of world population in a calm, philosophical, and scientific spirit.

Contraception, Infanticide, and Guilt

Meanwhile it is incumbent upon us to note that the "selfish" desire to avoid having children, owing to their inevitable interference with one's own "individuation," is itself exposed to a counter-motive—i.e., a certain sense of guilt that may operate as an additional source of opposition to Malthusianism. As we have said, owing to the unavoidable conflict between individuation and genesis, parents probably always greet the arrival, or prospective arrival, of their children with ambivalent feelings, with joy or tenderness on the one hand, but with some regrets for their own lost freedom on the other. But whereas the first of these feelings is eminently

respectable and can therefore be fully and frankly expressed, the second is of a kind to arouse shame and guilt, and tends therefore to be repressed and unacknowledged, sometimes indicating its existence only in roundabout or distorted ways.

Among such indirect expressions of hostility, one that is found fairly frequently in our society is an exaggerated or irrational anxiety concerning the welfare of a child. This is occasioned, as psycho-analysis has shown, by a " reaction formation " (or " expression through the opposite ") to a death wish towards the child—a death wish which, being itself unconscious, partakes of that same primitive " omnipotence of thought " to which we have already referred in another connection. The supposed " danger " to the child (often rationalized in absurd ways), which is responsible for the exaggerated and unreasonable anxiety, is ultimately the danger that springs from the " omnipotent " death wish of the parent. If we follow the illuminating suggestion of Theodor Reik, it would appear that a similar death wish is capable of explaining one of the features of the curious but (at least in some of its aspects) very widespread custom of the *couvade*, in which the husband pretends to share in his wife's labour pains, must refrain from various activities, and submit to various taboos for a certain period after the birth of his child. Among the taboos often imposed are a prohibition of seeing or approaching the new-born child, eating certain foods, or touching weapons. The primitives who practise such taboos usually justify them on the ground that they prevent harm coming to the child, and in the light of Reik's psycho-analytic explanations it would seem that the " harm " in question

comes from the death wishes of the father. The reason for the separation from the child is then clearly apparent, while the taboo on eating can be explained as totemism in reverse. In most forms of totemism there is a taboo on killing and eating the totem animal, who stands for the ancestor of the tribe. In the *couvade* a similar regression to what psychoanalysts term the "oral-sadistic" level occurs in connection with hostility to the child. And lest the reader should dismiss such an explanation as typical "far-fetched" Freudian fantasy, let him recall the story of Cronos in classical mythology, who had the unpleasant habit of eating his children after they were born, as also the numerous stories of child-eating ogres, giants, witches, or monsters which thrilled us with pleasant horror in the nursery. In the child the oral-sadistic stage is nearer consciousness than in the civilized adult, and in the savage also cannibalism is seldom far beneath the surface. Finally, as regards death wishes towards children in civilized societies, the present writer is aware of two cases in which fathers, writing to have notices of the birth of a child inserted in a newspaper, asked for the notice to be placed among the list of "deaths," and the editor of one well-known paper subsequently stated that such a slip was not so very uncommon.

But it is not only in myth and imagination that death wishes towards children take effect. As we reminded the reader in the first chapter of this book, among many peoples, some of them primitive, others highly civilized (such as the Chinese or the ancient Greeks), infanticide has been a regular and socially recognized practice. Now, as it happens, human tradition and ingenuity have devised four methods of

avoiding unwanted children, four methods which represent as it were so many steps, each farther removed from what would usually be considered homicide or actual murder. These steps are in order: infanticide itself, abortion, contraception, chastity. In this series each step produces less guilt and conflict than the one below it in the scale. Among those who practise infanticide, the actual killing or "exposure" of the infant is nearly always carried out within a few days of birth, before the "reactive" elements of parental tenderness have had time to assert themselves; if allowed to live beyond this period the child's continued existence is fairly safe so far as parental interference is concerned.* As regards procedure, the mere fact of exposure as a preferred method of infanticide testifies to the existence of guilt and outraged tenderness, which are less liable to be aroused if the child is allowed to die through lack of attention or through natural causes than if it were killed by deliberately inflicted violence.

Abortion is seldom if ever treated as the equivalent of murder. Nevertheless, since it unquestionably entails putting an end to an individual life that has already begun, it arouses uncomfortable feelings of guilt—feelings which it is sometimes sought to assuage by reference (once again) to the time factor, arbitrarily fixed limits, such as "before the fourth month" or the "quickening," being often used in this connection in an effort to reduce the guilt involved.†

* Our own contemporary legal practice takes similar account of the time factor, the slaying of a neonate being punished as a rule less severely than the killing of an older child.

† Though there is also a reality factor involved here, inasmuch as an operation in the later stages of pregnancy may be more dangerous.

The fact that abortion will sometimes occur spontaneously may also play a part, inasmuch as it may appear to reduce the element of deliberation in a way comparable to that involved in "exposure"; this applies of course especially to cases where abortion is induced by means other than direct surgical interference, and where it may in consequence not always be possible to be absolutely sure whether the abortion was due to the means adopted or to other causes.

Contraception avoids the creation of a new living being altogether. Nevertheless, such is the continuity of the biological series—sexual intercourse, conception, gestation, birth—that it is difficult to divest the process completely from the guilt associated with infanticide. On the psychological side, moreover, the association is closer still. If the use of contraceptives does not exactly imply a death wish against a child, it yet implies something very similar—a wish for the non-existence of a child; and for the unconscious, with its characteristic lack of discrimination, there is often little to distinguish these two wishes. Unconscious elements are, moreover, often important, since the death wish in question may be determined, not merely by selfish considerations of an adult order, but by remnants of a childish Œdipus or Cain complex. The dreaded "little stranger" may arouse feelings originally aroused by, and still unconsciously connected with, the fear of being dispossessed of the affection of a loved parent by the other parent or by the unwelcome arrival of a younger brother or sister. Since, as one grows older, all feelings of this kind become highly unrespectable, they are very apt to be repressed and to form the basis of ramifying complexes determining both the

individual's feelings towards potential children of his own and his attitude towards the whole question of birth control. When such a complex finds positive expression in a slightly displaced and generalized form, the person concerned may become an ardent Malthusian and advocate of contraception, and I have myself known several such advocates whose attitude seems to have been determined in this way. In early youth they were either elder members of large families, whose constant growth they regarded with increasing disapproval and dismay; or else they were only children who were much afraid of any disturbance of their own unique position and were violently jealous at any attention that their mothers gave to other children.

When, however, such an attitude becomes subject to strong repression, it may manifest itself by way of a " reaction formation," and the ideas both of abortion and of birth control may arouse violent guilt and horror. In the latter case we have the making of a strong opponent of Malthusianism. Indeed, opposition thus engendered is the last great source of resistance to the Neo-Malthusian practice and the related Malthusian principle of population that we shall mention. It is based, as we have seen, on our unconscious identification of birth control with infanticide and murder. To prevent children coming into the world is treated as equivalent to murdering them. Lest this in turn may seem fantastic, it may be suggested that we are all capable of experiencing feelings of this kind if we apply ideas of contraception retrospectively to children who are already born and who have attained a certain age—and for that matter to grown-up individuals. How terrible, we

are apt to think, if this or that delightful child or adolescent, so full of promise for himself and others, had been prevented from coming into existence through the cunning use of chemicals or rubber. The very thought makes us feel like murderers. And, going further back into history, what a disaster for humanity, we feel, it would have been if this or that great man, perhaps some well-known and universally honoured statesman, writer, scientist, or artist, had been unborn owing to the " precautions " taken by his parents. Indeed it would have been. And yet such an attitude makes us forget the prodigality of Nature. We forget the countless millions in the past who died in early life owing to the poverty, malnutrition, and disease (not to speak of war) that were the consequences of over-population, of the operation of the terrible principle that Malthus has enunciated. Among these were doubtless many geniuses who would have enriched human existence if the conditions of their own early lives had permitted them a longer span of years. We forget too the many others whose miserable existence at the economic border-line prevented the development of their full powers. We forget, above all, the vast reduction of human misery that birth control is capable of bringing to ordinary folk—the misery connected with the incessant pregnancies that undermine the health of mothers, with the economic worries and all the hardships incidental to a bare subsistence, with the grief at countless early deaths. We lose sight too of the impossibility under such conditions of developing a widespread appreciation of the higher joys of life, when, as has been the case with the vast majority of so many populations, almost every waking moment

is spent in grinding toil. It behoves us to weigh carefully all this certain general unhappiness and loss of higher satisfactions against the loss of a certain number of geniuses. We forget finally that, whatever we do, we can realize only a fantastically small fraction of the possibilities of Nature. With man as with other animals, the vast majority of germ cells must inevitably die without playing their part in the further history of the race; and with their death countless potential geniuses are also lost. Birth control actually increases only by some tiny fraction this loss among the germ cells; but it can increase immensely the welfare of the new individuals who are actually created. In view of this, it would seem that the "murder" argument against birth control is little more than a sentimental illusion. But this, of course, does not render it any the less powerful.

Although biologically, so far as reproduction is concerned, chastity is in exactly the same position as contraception, it arouses far less guilt. This is doubtless because there is no sexual indulgence. Abstention from this pleasure removes, or atones for, the "murder" element in non-reproduction, whereas contraception, which retains sexual pleasure while avoiding reproduction, is felt to be hubristic, to be "cheating" Nature. So strong would appear to be the compensating virtue of chastity that the Roman Catholic Church, which almost unreservedly condemns contraception—sometimes on the ground that it prevents the creation of immortal souls who might enjoy eternal bliss—has scarcely anything but praise for chastity, and has even enjoined it on its ministers. Apparently the gain to the individual souls of the chaste outweighs in the total scheme of things the

prospect of eternal bliss for souls as yet unborn. And many who do not belong to the Roman Catholic or any other Church hold that on moral grounds (which are seldom clearly stated) the merits of chastity absolve those who practise it from that aura of immorality which still attaches to contraception.

CHAPTER III

PEACE, PROSPERITY, AND POPULATION POLICIES

The Need for a World-Population Policy

HAVING examined the intimate psychological nature of some of the chief prejudices that tend to prevent a calm and unbiased approach to population problems, let us now in this final chapter adopt a more practical standpoint and consider in particular how we may best deal with those aspects of population problems which are most likely to lead to war, or at least to those anxieties, envies, ambitions, miseries, and discontents which make wars easy. It is of course the international and inter-racial questions which are here of chief importance. The general situation is abundantly clear and has already been indicated at the end of Chapter I. The density of human population varies immensely in the different habitable regions of the earth, and this variation bears no constant relationship to the actual resources of these regions, still less to their potential resources. At one extreme there are large territories (such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand) which could, if not immediately, at any rate in a relatively short time, be capable of supporting much larger populations than they have at present. The people inhabiting these regions, however, are strongly under the influence of the western tendency to low birth rates, and therefore show little eagerness to exploit

the resources of their lands to the uttermost. Indeed, they are like a small family inhabiting a large mansion, many rooms of which are hardly used. At the other extreme are the " teeming millions " of such countries as Egypt, India, China, as yet hardly touched by any tendency to a reduced fertility but living in countries the resources of which (as at present developed) are barely sufficient to maintain them in the direst poverty. They correspond to the dwellers in some grossly overcrowded slum. Between these extremes are numerous countries of varying extent and resources, varying densities of population, and at various stages of decline in the birth rate, some affected deeply by the western tendency, others only beginning to be touched by it. Among these " intermediate " countries we find contrasts, similar in kind to those between the " extremes " but smaller in degree. Generally speaking, throughout the scale, the countries with lower birth rates enjoy a higher standard of living than those with greater fertility. They are also usually more industrialized, and when they are large they are obviously more powerful than these latter. The possession of greater military power (actual or potential) by the infertile countries might seem to afford some guarantee against aggression on the part of their less prosperous but more fertile neighbours. The same is implied to some extent by the possession of a higher general culture and a greater national consciousness, for the reason that in the absence of these there is hardly enough knowledge concerning conditions in other lands, together with power of organization and community feeling within the homeland, to arouse envy of more prosperous distant peoples or the desire to wage war against them.

Nevertheless, modern conditions of transport and communication, which are making the whole globe into " one world," and the rapidly increasing sense of nationality which is so characteristic of our time, are tending to produce at once greater internal cohesion and greater knowledge of conditions of life in other parts of the earth. Industrialization is also inevitably, though sometimes still relatively slowly, growing—at any rate in all the larger countries in the world—and with industrialization there comes the possibility of military power.

These considerations seem to show that it would be rash to assume that " advanced " and relatively thinly-populated countries are permanently safe from the threat of aggression on the part of their more fertile neighbours merely because they are better equipped technically and educationally; as rash perhaps as it would be at the present day for an upper class to consider itself secure from revolution because it is wealthier and more cultured than the proletariat. And this parallel with the internal conditions of a country may serve to remind us that, apart from the threat of war, there is another reason why we cannot continue to look with equanimity at gross differences in economic well-being between one country and another. The conscience of mankind has for many years been increasingly aware that such inequalities *within* a community are fundamentally incompatible with democratic ideals. Under the stimulus of war, with its tendency to draw all classes of a community together in a united effort to resist the common danger, it is now generally recognized, in theory at least, that it is the duty of the government of a democracy to see that every individual citizen has the

wherewithal for healthy and decent living, together with reasonable opportunity for the development of his interests and capacities. If there is any truth in Wendell Wilkie's concept of " one world," if there is any hope for the arousal of that feeling of world unity and world responsibility implied by the new organization of the United Nations, it cannot be long before our consciences become similarly sensitive to the existence of gross overcrowding, poverty, malnutrition, ill health, and early death in communities and cultures other than our own, before, in fact, we are shocked by human squalor and degradation wherever they are found. This implies that the economic problems of the poorer countries must to some extent concern the richer ones, which in turn necessitates attention to the population difficulties of the former.

Yet another piece of evidence pointing to the same conclusion is to be found in the increasing realization that the economic welfare of the various countries and regions of the world is to a large extent inter-dependent. The hard necessities of war have taught us that co-operation is for most purposes a better way than competition, alike for individuals and for States. Just as mutual help and a pooling of resources have led the allied nations to victory in war, so also will they lead most easily to prosperity in peace. Each nation will be better off with wealthy neighbours than with poor ones. It therefore conduces as much to our economic advantage as to our moral peace of mind to raise the present low standard of life in the backward countries, and this again implies that we must try to rectify their overcrowding and their over-population.

For all these reasons, then, we cannot afford to contemplate with indifference the permanent existence

alongside one another of rich, thinly-peopled, slow-breeding countries and poor, densely populated and fast-breeding ones. Some kind of policy will surely have to be formulated for dealing with the gross discrepancies in the human lot that are implied by such conditions. And yet so far there has been very little attempt to envisage the world's population problem as a whole, in all its biological, political, economic, and moral implications. Here again perhaps we may be encountering some manifestation of those various psychological obstacles to the unbiased treatment of population questions to which we have already drawn attention. True, there have, in the last fifteen years or so, been a few highly valuable studies of the actual facts of world population, together with a much larger number of works dealing with the more specific problems of particular nations or regions.* But these latter have been concerned far more with the problem of the declining birth rate and with the assumed consequent future decline of population in certain western countries than with the more immediate problems of the overcrowded countries or with the relations between these two kinds of countries. These studies, concerned as they are with particular problems affecting certain regions, afford comparatively little help in the framing of a general policy aiming at world peace and world prosperity, while in so far as they are (as is quite frequently the case) alarmist in tendency they are even likely to make the achievement of any agreed world policy more difficult. Such a policy is not likely to spring from an atmosphere of panic.

* A convenient summary (with indication of sources) will be found in Dorothy Good's "Some Recent Studies of Population," *Geographical Review*, 1945, 35, p. 122.

On what lines, indeed, is it possible to conceive of a general policy for dealing with the problems of world population? I would suggest we can distinguish three main principles which could serve as possible bases for such a policy. The first and most obvious consists in generalizing and rendering explicit the implications of our present western attitude. It has two main features: (*a*) an attempt to raise the birth rate in the western countries; (*b*) the exclusion of foreigners, especially those of different race, by means of immigration laws. It might be briefly and not too unjustly called "The Dog-in-the-Manger Policy," since it so often seeks to preserve rich and comparatively undeveloped lands for the exclusive use of their present relatively small, prosperous, and infertile populations. The difficulties and dangers of such an attitude are to some extent admitted, and an attempt is made to reduce them by seeking to increase the fertility of the populations in question, an end which, it is held, is already very desirable on other grounds.

The second possible principle is in some ways the opposite of the first. It would consist in attempting to equalize population pressure in various parts of the world by freely encouraging immigration from the more crowded to the less crowded regions, irrespective of nationality or race. Thus there would be some attempt to distribute land and resources according to numbers, and the more fertile races would be regarded as justly claiming the land to which their greater fruitfulness entitled them. Such a policy of sharing or pooling the world's land might perhaps be called "The Philanthropic Policy," since it would obviously involve a discarding of national or racial prejudices under the influence of a charitable impulse or a sense

of justice. It would also seem to be in accordance with the general principles both of Christianity and of Communism, as applied to this particular problem. In any case, according to this principle, salvation is sought primarily through migration and the redistribution of population rather than through control of population by accelerating or slowing down its growth at the source.

The third principle would seek a remedy chiefly by attempting to reduce the population pressure in the overcrowded lands, by encouraging the methods that had proved efficacious in the West—i.e., birth control combined so far as possible with general economic, technical, and cultural advance. It would thus aim at improving conditions where they are bad without imposing any serious handicap or sacrifice on those dwelling in the more fortunate and sparsely peopled regions; though it would perhaps, as a supplementary measure, seek to prepare the inhabitants of these latter parts for an inevitable decline both in their relative (perhaps indeed absolute) numbers and in their relative cultural prestige. (The decline in relative numbers would be a demographic consequence of the economic development of hitherto backward and uncultivated parts of the earth, and some decline in relative prestige would be the almost unavoidable result of the spread of education to hitherto untutored and illiterate peoples.)

Such a policy I have elsewhere suggested calling " the policy of realism and birth control," * but since at once the principal and most novel feature of this policy lies in the explicit adoption of birth control

* J. C. Flugel, " Population Policies and World Affairs," *World Affairs*, 1946, p. 163.

measures for overcrowded lands, it might perhaps more briefly and appropriately be called " the Neo-Malthusian Policy."

It is clear that each of these policies has its advantages and difficulties. Indeed, at first sight the difficulties might seem a good deal more conspicuous than the advantages. But since, as we have indicated above, it would seem highly desirable, if not indeed imperative, to formulate some generally agreed attitude to the problems of world population, we will proceed to study the outlook for these policies in somewhat greater detail.

The Dog-in-the-Manger Policy

This policy recommends itself as being most in accordance with our present ways of thought and our prevailing moral and political attitudes. In fact, it may be said to be an attempt to let sleeping dogs lie.

Nevertheless it would appear to suffer from certain grave drawbacks, of which three may be mentioned here.

(1) Its chief positive feature lies in the endeavour to increase the fertility of the slowly-breeding western peoples, and it is just here that by pretty general admission there lie the chief difficulties and uncertainties. Since the arousal of alarm in connection with the protracted fall in the birth rates of many western countries (an alarm intensified by the close association in the fascist countries of fertility with national " virility "), quite a large number of different measures have been taken to bring about a rise in the birth rate. These measures have been of three main kinds: exhortation and appeal, financial assistance or relief to parents—direct or indirect,

and a lightening of the burden of parenthood by the provision of suitable medical, social, and educational services. It would be inappropriate to enter into a detailed consideration of all these measures here. There is a growing literature upon the subject and to this we must refer the reader.* There are perhaps fairly substantial reasons to believe that measures of this kind will eventually at least have some success (we shall return to this matter in the final section of the present chapter), but unfortunately at the moment there is little really satisfactory evidence as to what has been achieved by the steps already taken. It seems to be pretty well agreed that many of the earlier ones—e.g., those employed in France and Italy—were largely ineffective. Those adopted in Nazi Germany, on the other hand, seem to have had some success, though this in the opinion of some competent students was only temporary, largely a consequence of raising the marriage rate, while a series of interesting and much more enlightened measures taken in Sweden † are too recent for any results to become clearly apparent, especially as they have been seriously interfered with by the war. Indeed, the unsettled economic and political conditions that have prevailed in recent years (more especially of course the great slump and the world war) have made it extremely difficult to judge of the efficacy of any measures of the kind in question. What might appear at first sight to be a result of the larger families campaign is a remarkable rise in the birth rates of many western countries during the war—a rise that contrasts very strikingly with the

* A convenient short account will be found in Eva M. Hubback, *Population Facts and Policies*, 1945.

† See Alva Myrdal, *The Nation and the Family*, 1945.

fall in the birth rates of the same countries during World War I.* The fact, however, that this rise was as marked in countries where there had been no official measures to raise the birth rate as in those where there had, and that it occurred alike in belligerent, "occupied," and neutral countries, suggests rather that some other and more universally prevalent influence has been at work. In view, then, of the general uncertainty as to the factors that have produced this interesting change, it would seem wise to suspend judgment both as to the future fertility of the western world and the efficacy of such specific measures as have been introduced with a view to raising it. It can, however, be said with reasonable confidence that, in spite of recent rises in the birth rates of many western nations, there is as yet no indication that the populations of these countries will be able to compete as regards mere numbers with the "teeming millions" of the countries where the characteristic western decline in the birth rate has not occurred. And this statement holds even when we take full account of the low and perhaps still further declining death rate in the western countries (where in particular there is still room in spite of much improvement for a further decline in the infant mortality rate).

(2) Even if such a competition in numbers could be seriously undertaken, it would seem in many respects highly undesirable—at any rate, in the case of the more developed and longer established western countries. We would refer once again to what we have already said concerning the inevitability

* See *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bank for International Settlements*, 1945.

of the antagonism between individuation and genesis. Although it is perfectly true, as numerous recent writers have pointed out, that the unbridled pursuit of individuation to the extent of unduly sacrificing family cares for the sake of "selfish" individual enjoyment or achievement would lead to "race suicide," it also remains true that the devotion of energies to the bringing up of numerous large families necessarily implies some interference with the higher development associated with "culture" in the broadest sense, so that those western countries which entered on a fertility race with less advanced lands would have to be prepared to lose some of their pre-eminence in cultural achievement. More time and effort would have to be spent on coping with the essentials of existence, and less would be left over for the arts, graces, profundities, and subtleties of life (though doubtless also less for trivialities).

Connected with this there is, at any rate in the case of already thickly-populated European countries, another matter, one all too seldom referred to in the literature of the subject—i.e., the need felt by many human beings (including assuredly many of the most cultured) for a certain amount or degree of solitude, of escape from close contact with large numbers of their fellows. The incidence, individual variability, causes, and fundamental nature of this need, and its relation to the opposite tendency of gregariousness or need for company, raise interesting problems, as yet hardly investigated, into which we cannot enter here. But concerning its existence there can be no doubt. It manifests itself alike in the distaste, mental discomfort, and irritability engendered in many by enforced constant companionship with other men (as

in slums, concentration camps, army life, and above all perhaps in shipwrecked mariners adrift in a small boat), and in the desire to escape from crowded cities into the countryside and the "wide open spaces" where one can "commune with Nature." In all these cases there are of course other complicating factors, but the desire for at least a relative solitude is a constant element which is surely of importance. Such solitude is not easy to come by in thickly-populated countries, and the constant growth of urban areas is making escape into the countryside an ever more lengthy and difficult business. And yet this urbanization or, what is perhaps even worse, suburbanization, is an inescapable feature of an increasing population in a small country. People are not always consistent in this matter. Some of those I have known who are most anxious to increase the British population and most concerned at the fall in the birth rate in this country are also most resentful at every new house erected on what was hitherto an open field. Surely it is time that we realized we cannot have things both ways, and that a continued increase in the number of Britishers, even if it could be achieved without economic hardship, implies the final disappearance of "England's green and pleasant land" which Blake and many others before and after him have loved and cherished. And what holds of England is true also in some degree of several other western European countries—eventually, of course, if we have a sufficiently prolonged fertility race, of all countries. Few of us, I believe, have sufficient love for mankind in the mass to contemplate with equanimity the prospect of a planet swarming with humanity.

But even on the purely economic side there are

serious reasons for misgiving. If there is any truth at all in the Malthusian position as we have stated it on earlier pages, if—as we held—there is reason to believe that the decreasing poverty of the western world is due in considerable measure to the reduction of the birth rate, there is surely a danger in asking that we should drastically reverse the process and engage in a fertility competition with countries where there is admittedly gross poverty and overcrowding and where the standard of life is far lower than our own. This is particularly the case at the present time, when the whole of Europe is suffering from the dislocation, devastation, and exhaustion consequent upon six years of "total" war. At the moment of writing there is everywhere a shortage of the necessities and amenities of life—of food, of clothes, of fuel, of houses, of the means of transport, and of many other things. The building-up of an adequate supply of these is a great immediate post-war task. It will require all the skill and energy at our disposal—and meanwhile we shall go short; we shall have to consume less even while we labour to produce more. But children, during their early years, are consumers only; they are (let us face it) economically an impediment in the way of immediate reconstruction. By bringing them into the world at the present moment in large numbers we should be seriously interfering with the task of rehabilitating our disordered European world and making more difficult the attainment of that economic security and prosperity which we so ardently desire. Would it not be wiser to restrain our demand for an increase in the number of our children until at least we are assured that those we have will enjoy all the necessities of healthy living? The answer would most

probably be " Yes," were we not so alarmed at the prospect of being outnumbered by other peoples and races—alarmed perhaps because of the operation of those half-conscious or unconscious psychological factors that we dealt with in the previous chapter. Bearing this in mind, we should surely do well to pause before we give the policy of population competition our approval.*

(3) The third reason against the adoption of " The Dog-in-the-Manger Policy " is a moral one. This policy is at bottom narrowly selfish in a national or racial sense. It seeks to preserve at all costs (even, if necessary, at great inconvenience and discomfort to ourselves) the exclusive use of the lands we happen to possess, without concerning ourselves in the least with the problems of overcrowding and poverty in other lands. It is indeed a policy both of uncharity and anarchy, and is therefore utterly opposed to that sense of world-mindedness and world responsibility that we are beginning to recognize as an essential

* Perhaps the only serious argument in favour of the view that—in spite of present distress—we should seek to raise the birth rate now is to the effect that a lowered birth rate in the immediate post-war years (much as it might ease our present problems) will increase the unfavourable age distribution of the population in twenty or thirty years' time. It is not easy to decide how much weight to attribute to such a consideration. A shortage of persons of vigorous age might possibly be serious economically or militarily at a future date, though it is also possible that by that time our increased control of (atomic?) energy may make such a matter relatively unimportant in both fields, because of easier production and distribution on the one hand and because of the increased deadliness of weapons of war on the other. Turning to present conditions, a reduction of immediate distress will surely improve the chances of a peaceful settlement of world affairs, and since in the absence of such a settlement the outlook for humanity is almost intolerably bleak, it may well be that this should take precedence of anything else. The present writer at any rate is inclined to take the latter view.

condition of the maintenance of peace. It is in these respects very similar to the armaments race, in which each nation endeavoured to increase its fighting forces and its instruments of war as a defensive measure against the similar endeavours of its neighbours. And in the long run the population race is likely to be no less disastrous. Surely modern statesmanship can suggest something better than this counsel of despair.

The Philanthropic Policy

This policy, as already noted, is in some respects the opposite of the previous one. It can also be considered as in some ways an application to nations and races of the principle of equal distribution that is an essential feature of Communism as a political and economic regime within any given group or nation. The chief difference is that, whereas in Communism of the latter kind the accent is placed on movable goods, in the world policy we are here considering the emphasis lies rather on free access for men of all nations or races to all the habitable territories of the globe. If this policy were adopted, comparatively "empty" countries, such as the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, would welcome emigrants from crowded countries such as India, China, and Japan, while, within Europe, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Scandinavia would take the overflow from Italy and the still rapidly increasing populations of the Balkan countries.

There is perhaps nothing in human nature to render such a policy utterly impossible. During a great part of the nineteenth century there was even an approximation to it in the United States, which extended a welcome to the adventurous, the distressed, and the

oppressed from every part of Europe. At that time nations were less exclusive than they are at present, and in what seemed the almost limitless tracts of North America there was room to offer hospitality to all. But the prevailing attitude at the present is very different, alike in America and in other parts of the world. In the years between the two world wars the nations grew far more reluctant to admit outsiders to their territory. Even for tourists and for casual visitors there were passports, visas, and other cumbersome restrictions that were unknown in the more enlightened countries before 1914, while almost everywhere there were formalities and searching inquiries to be undergone before permanent residence and the acceptance of paid work was permitted. The U.S.A. departed from its traditional welcome to all by the institution of its system of quotas, in effect grading persons of different nationalities in order of desirability, while some races were excluded altogether. South Africa went so far as to repatriate many Indians at its own expense. France, it is true, showed in some ways a hospitality beyond that of most other countries, but contemplated not without uneasiness the growing number of foreigners within its borders. While pity for the victims of Hitler's tyranny opened many doors throughout the world that would otherwise have remained closed, here also there were visible reluctance and anxiety, especially with regard to allowing the refugees to exercise their vocations and professions. In general, then, the adoption of "The Philanthropic Policy" would require a very big change in the present attitude towards immigrants. Any proposal for organized migrations on a scale large enough to afford perceptible relief in the overcrowded

countries would certainly arouse a storm of protest in the proposed countries of immigration. So great indeed would be the initial resistance that a long and intensive campaign of propaganda would be necessary before any measure of the kind could be proposed with any reasonable hope of acceptance. Most readers will probably be inclined to dismiss the policy as visionary and impracticable on these grounds alone.

But if by some astonishing change of feeling, by some sudden appreciation of "the brotherhood of man," this policy did become practicable, it would still be possible to point to certain grave disadvantages that would tend both to counterbalance the more immediate benefits it would bring and to make it ineffective as a long-range solution of the world's population problems.

In the first place, underlying the racial "selfishness" or national prejudice of the country of immigration, there are certain objections of a more reasonable kind. On the social and political side there is the disturbance to traditional ways of thinking, feeling, and acting which mass immigration of people from another culture would be likely to produce. Tradition contributes greatly to the smooth working and stability of social and political institutions, and immigrants would not share the traditions of their new country; indeed, in most cases they would have different customs and traditions of their own which would conflict with those of their hosts. Using the concepts of a modern school of anthropology, the whole "pattern of culture" might tend to be upset and much of value, much indeed that is essential to national integrity, might thereby be lost. It is true that, as members of this same school have pointed out, no one pattern

contains all the best features of human social life; each culture has its own strong and weak points and may stand to gain by a realization that the ways of others may be in some respects better than its own. For this reason a relatively small number of immigrants, especially if the racial and cultural disparity involved is not too great, might well provide a stimulating influence. But immigration on this scale would do little to solve the problem at issue.

Furthermore if, as would often be the case, the racial, cultural or religious differences are in fact very considerable, there would tend to be created a powerful minority group the existence of which would give rise to difficult problems of a kind with which some countries are already painfully familiar—problems such as (to confine ourselves to instances within the British Commonwealth) are connected with the Moslems in India, the French in Canada, the Dutch in South Africa, the Protestants in Ireland.

If, as would also frequently occur, the immigrants had a generally lower standard of life than their hosts, they might only too easily tend to become a vast racial proletariat (of the kind constituted by the large negro population of the United States), giving rise perhaps both to a disastrous social cleavage and to serious economic dislocation by their willingness to sell their labour much more cheaply than the native-born. In view of the immense and often tragic problems created by such a situation, this is surely something which should be avoided at almost any cost.

There is finally the Malthusian question itself, as it affects the countries of immigration. If, as we suggested in the previous section, some of these countries could ill afford, on purely economic and perhaps also

on other grounds, to embark on a policy of great expansion of their own native population, it would in some ways be still more difficult for them to cope with vast immigration from abroad. True, the majority of these immigrants would be not helpless children but able-bodied men and women, who would be capable of actively contributing to the work of the community. On the other hand, with the help of organized modern transport, the increase of population through immigration might be (and, if it were to afford perceptible alleviation of distress in the overcrowded countries, would have to be) a good deal more rapid than any increase of population due to a rise in the birth rate—and the difficulty created would be to that extent greater. Indeed, only the countries which still possess large undeveloped resources or uncultivated land (and are prepared to exploit them with efficiency and vigour) could reasonably hope to offer hospitality on the scale required, and even then perhaps at the cost of some (at least temporary) decline in their own standard of living.

The most damning argument against " The Philanthropic Policy," however, arises from a contemplation of what would be likely to happen in the countries of emigration. Temporary relief could doubtless be created if the emigration were rapid and on a sufficiently large scale—relief of a kind similar to that following a sudden reduction of the population through pestilence or other natural cause. But would such relief be permanent? Unless the available resources of the country were increased or the birth rate diminished, it certainly would not. The situation would be exactly similar to the hypothetical and real cases dealt with in Chapter I. In the more favour-

able circumstances created by the reduction of population pressure the death rate would, for a time at least, go down; and quite possibly also the birth rate would go up. In any case, the natural increase of population would become greater, and in a few years the overcrowding and over-population would be as bad as ever. The effort and the sacrifice will have been in vain. Manifold hard problems will have been created in the countries of immigration without any permanent alleviation of distress in the countries of emigration.

Such would be the consequences of neglecting the doctrine of Malthus. It is clear, I think, that " The Philanthropic Policy," regarded as an attempt to deal with the world's population problems solely in terms of redistribution, is doomed to failure and would in the long run be productive of more evil than of good. To be effective it would have to be supplemented by measures aiming at a reduction of the birth rate in the overcrowded lands. There is of course nothing impossible about this; but, in view of the difficulties connected with mass migration that we have just passed in brief review, it might well seem that it would be easier to make the reduction in the birth rate of the overcrowded countries the chief measure rather than a supplementary one. We should then get an approximation to our third policy, that which we have called the " Neo-Malthusian " one, and to this we may now turn.

The Neo-Malthusian Policy

In approaching this policy it should perhaps from the start be borne in mind that in adopting it we should only be accelerating what would (as is shown particu-

larly by the falling birth rate of Japan) almost certainly take place eventually, in so far as the overcrowded countries become westernized and generally improve their economic and cultural position. But if left to itself the process is likely to be a slow one, since in virtue of the Malthusian law the mere fact of the high fertility of the countries in question constitutes a major obstacle to their advance. If the difficulties, dangers, and miseries attendant on over-population are to be abolished within a reasonable period, it would be far better to help the process, so to speak, at both ends—by reducing the birth rate at the same time as steps are taken to accelerate economic and cultural development. Once again it is desirable to emphasize that Neo-Malthusianism is not a substitute for economic and social reform but an adjuvant, sometimes perhaps an essential condition, of such reform. Here, however, we are not directly concerned with the economic and social side but only with the Neo-Malthusian aspect of this double process.

In order to consider this policy in a pure form, let us suppose that we abandon the project of migration, except perhaps as a small-scale and subsidiary measure, and see what are the prospects and difficulties of an attempted solution along Neo-Malthusian lines.

We have of course to reckon with the various psychological obstacles to Neo-Malthusian theory and practice with which we dealt in Chapter II. Our study of these obstacles was, however, primarily derived from observation of our own western culture, and we must be prepared for certain differences in dealing with other—and in some respects, more backward—cultures. In particular, the problem is obviously complicated by a number of factors

such as: (*a*) extreme poverty of large numbers of the population, (*b*) widespread illiteracy, (*c*) relatively poor communications, (*d*) the fact that in some cases at least—e.g., India, the Dutch East Indies—co-operation between Europeans and natives would probably be required, so that a double barrier of obstruction and prejudice might be encountered.

Fortunately a number of pioneer efforts have been made which reveal something of the prospects of success, the methods to be employed, and the difficulties to be overcome. Above all, credit should be given to Margaret Sanger, Edith How-Martyn, and Eileen Palmer, who have made extensive tours in eastern countries and other parts of the world with a view to spreading a knowledge of contraceptive methods and of their sociological importance.* In Egypt, India, China, and elsewhere there have also been a number of native workers (mostly medical men and women) who—sometimes inspired by the above-mentioned European pioneers—have done much to throw light upon the prospects of birth control in their respective countries, both through their writings and speeches and through the organization of health centres, maternity centres, and birth control clinics. Among these may perhaps be mentioned Dr. M. A. Anous in Egypt, Dr. Dorothy C. Y. Chen in China, and Dr. A. P. Pillay in India. The

* For what follows I am much indebted to Miss O. M. Johnson and Mrs. Eileen Palmer, both for their personal communications and for referring me to published information. The most comprehensive accounts of work on birth control in non-European countries are probably to be found in the volumes of *Marriage Hygiene*. See also *A History of Birth Control* by Norman E. Himes and *Round the World for Birth Control* (published under the auspices of the Birth Control International Information Centre).

last-mentioned, by editing for a time during the 1930's a periodical of unique character and interest, *Marriage Hygiene*, did much to stimulate and co-ordinate the efforts of those interested in the subject in various countries of the world. From the pioneer work of these and others it would seem possible to draw certain tentative conclusions, of which the chief are perhaps as follows:—

(1) Among the more educated members of the over-populated countries there is both a realization of the need to restrict the growth of population (which in some cases has been alarmingly rapid in the period between the two world wars) and an approval of contraception as the most hopeful and convenient means of doing so. In particular, certain organized bodies representing enlightened opinion (such as the All Indian Medical Conference, the All India Women's Conference, and the Chinese Medical Association) have passed resolutions in favour of birth control. There is some reason also to suppose that a desire to make practical use of contraception is easy to arouse even among the less educated members of such countries. Mrs. Sanger and Mrs. How-Martyn at least report that they found on their journeys that, "contrary to gloomy predictions, men and women of all classes were pathetically anxious to learn about birth control," while in one place (Penang), where Mrs. Sanger had been told that there was "no interest," the women "implored her help, literally clutching the appliances she had with her for demonstration purposes."

(2) There is of course some opposition, obstruction, or unwillingness, but, so far as our present information goes, considerably less than might perhaps have been

expected. In India Mrs. Sanger found " practically no religious opposition." In an interesting and characteristic discussion on the subject which she had with Gandhi, he revealed himself as not opposed to population restriction but unwilling to approve of contraception as a means, holding rather that women should exercise their influence to restrain their husbands when for any reason no further children were desired (though he added realistically, " the real problem is they do not want to resist them "). This advocacy of chastity, though based on moral rather than religious grounds, brings him near to the position adopted by many Christians in this matter. Tagore and Nehru, however, were far more favourable in their attitude to birth control.*

In China there was even less opposition than in India. What there was appeared to be indirect and to come chiefly from official sources. A prevalent view was that Sun Yat Sen's " The People's Three Principles " contained unfavourable references to the subject, and in consequence officials whose private opinion might be in support of birth control were afraid to express public approval for fear of political attacks. The allusion to Sun Yat Sen, however, may quite well be

* Very soon after these words were written the Commission of Inquiry into the 1943 Bengal famine in its final report (published September 20, 1945) included in its recommendations " the encouragement of birth control to reduce the present increase of population " (which, it was estimated, might easily, " in the absence of major calamities," increase from four hundred to five hundred million in the next twenty or twenty-five years). The report, however, also recommended large-scale emigration from India to " sparsely populated " parts of the Commonwealth and Empire—a recommendation in the spirit of what has been here described as the " philanthropic policy." The Commission thus envisages a combination of our second and third policies, which—for the sake of simplicity—we have considered in isolation.

based on a misunderstanding, for elsewhere this great revolutionary leader is said to have stated (in an open letter to Li Hung Chang written some sixty years ago): " At present China is suffering from over-population. which will bring impending danger in its wake. . . . Our food problem is already acute and the situation will be much worse as time goes on. If we take no timely means of remedy it will surely trouble us." * True, there is no indication as to whether contraception would be considered such a " timely means," but this may be only because it was then very little known in China. Indeed, as I write there comes news which would seem to indicate a change in the Chinese " official " attitude, for we are told that " in Chungking on May 18 (presumably 1945), according to the Associated Press, the Sixth National Kuomintang Congress adopted resolutions favouring a sweeping programme for promotion of national solidarity which included ' guidance in proper birth control.' " †

As regards the Mohammedan world we have from Egypt a pronouncement of the Mufti, Sheik Abdel Meguid Selim,‡ to the effect that contraception may now be considered permissible (even if only one partner sees fit) for reasons connected with the welfare of children or the health of parents.

On the whole therefore, so far as present evidence goes, opposition of a moral or religious kind would seem to be less rather than greater than in European cultures. Indeed, even in the East a good deal of the

* Quoted in *Round the World for Birth Control* (Section: Shanghai).

† Quoted from an article by the Planned Parenthood Federation in *Freedom* (Pasadena, California), 1945, 4, No. 2.

‡ " Religious Aspects of Birth Control and Abortion," *Journal of the Egyptian Medical Association*, 1937, 20.

hostility encountered seems to originate from European or American religious sources, particularly from the Roman Catholic Church, which of course has always been hostile to birth control. Thus, in the Philippines Mrs. How-Martyn encountered much obstruction from this quarter, leading to police interference with her meetings.

In Japan hostility appeared to be chiefly political in origin and connected with that country's very strong expansionist policy, as a result of which discussion of birth control was prohibited as coming into the category of " dangerous thoughts." Here, however, as we have noted, the birth rate has already been falling for some time, and it would seem that in this matter the general influence of westernization has prevailed over that of local militarism. It appears likely too that the fall will now be accelerated by Japan's defeat. Indeed it is greatly to be hoped that this will be the case, especially if the Japanese are to be excluded from their former outlets overseas. The furtherance of the birth control movement in Japan will go far towards solving the difficult problem of preventing future aggression on the part of this densely populated, highly industrialized, and ambitious country.

As regards the greater part of Africa our information is very meagre. It is remarkable, however, that in 1935 the birth control movement in the Union of South Africa (which was co-ordinated in the same year by the creation of the South African National Council for Birth Control) received official recognition in the Annual Report of the Department of Public Health, where, after emphasis on the dire poverty in country districts, it was stated that " more practical good could be accomplished by this teaching (i.e., the

spacing and limitation of families) than by any other method." It is noteworthy too that from such records as are available it would appear that non-Europeans are making no less use than Europeans of the facilities provided by birth control clinics in that country.*

Considering the world situation as a whole, we may thus say, on the basis of the present admittedly inadequate evidence, that the indications are that there would be comparatively little active opposition to "The Neo-Malthusian Policy," if it were energetically pushed, in the over-populated countries.

(3) Indeed, there is every reason to believe that the really serious difficulties of the policy lie not in active opposition, but in the ignorance, inertia, illiteracy, and poverty of the great masses. So far only the fringes of the poorer population have been touched, and practically all those who have worked in this field are agreed that progress will be very slow unless vigorous and large-scale measures are adopted. What is needed is: (*a*) suitable training of doctors, midwives, health workers, and others in the techniques of birth control; (*b*) the provision of a large number of birth control clinics not only in westernized centres but also in remoter districts; (*c*) the free provision of contraceptive appliances to those in need of them among the poorer sections of the population; (*d*) further study of the methods of contraception best suited for use among the ignorant, illiterate, and unskilled. It is agreed, further, that a programme of this magnitude can scarcely be carried through except with government initiative or at least with government support.

With this last recommendation we are brought back

* Quoted from *Marriage Hygiene*, 1936, 3, 92.

very forcibly to the necessity for a greater general realization of the importance of world population problems in all their varied aspects. The need for government support on a wide scale in backward countries might well make us in turn reject "The Neo-Malthusian Policy" as impracticable. Nevertheless, on reasonable reflection, it should surely commend itself as preferable to the alternatives. It is much more hopeful, sensible, and humane than "The Dog-in-the-Manger Policy," with its emphasis on racial exclusiveness and birth rate competition; while the difficulties it would involve—psychological, social, and financial—considerable as these may be, would be far less than those attaching to "The Philanthropic Policy," with its proposal for a vast influx into prosperous countries of alien, impecunious, and almost certainly unwanted guests. If we are serious in our endeavour to introduce an era of world peace and world prosperity under the ægis of the United Nations, it should surely be easy to establish a World Population Council, or other appropriate body, which would study the problems of world population as a whole, with a view at once to removing any threat of "race suicide" where this exists, and to reducing dangerous over-population in the overcrowded parts of the world. It would then assuredly be found that the effort, organization, and financial outlay required for the Neo-Malthusian solution of this latter problem would be trifling indeed compared, for instance, with the sacrifices that the nations have made for purposes of war—and such as they are they would be made not for mere self-preservation but for the increase of human welfare and for the removal of an insidious cause of human conflict.

The adoption and implementation of such a policy would, of course, be much easier if the psychological resistance to Neo-Malthusianism were more fully realized and overcome. Hence the importance of the considerations raised in the second chapter of this book. The policy would, however, also be easier if two subsidiary steps were taken:—

(i) If the encouragement of Neo-Malthusianism in overcrowded countries were introduced as part of a general policy of " nations can live at home," a policy which assumed that anything in the nature of mass migration was unnecessary to ensure peace and prosperity in any part of the world. This would in effect imply a recognition of the *status quo* as a point of departure, and to this extent might seem unduly favourable to those peoples or races which by an accident of history found themselves in possession of rich territories—e.g., the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand—to which they themselves had migrated at an earlier period. The situation here is comparable to that of recognizing the right of individual citizens to any property they may legally hold, by whatever means they or their (sometimes remote) forbears may have come into possession of this property. Such a recognition is essential to the evolutionary as distinct from the revolutionary method of social reform, and is the method by which in recent years the democracies have set about reform. It is probably the only method by which internal reform can be accomplished without violence. Having once recognized this right of possession, however, reform can be brought about by taxing the resources of the richer citizens for purposes relating to the common good, including especially such purposes as may enable the poorer

citizens to improve their lot by their own efforts. Similarly, as regards the national possession of land, probably the only method of avoiding war is to recognize the rights of those nations who actually hold any given territory (especially when the boundaries of such territory are well defined), to encourage those less well circumstanced to help themselves—by economic development and also by birth control where this seems necessary—and to ask the richer nations to contribute freely the necessary aid, in money, labour, or materials, for the furtherance of the general wellbeing of the poorer countries. Looked at in this light, the organization, even on a large scale, of birth control facilities in the latter countries would be one of the cheapest and easiest ways in which such help could be given.

Stated quite frankly and realistically, then, the policy advocated amounts to this: The more prosperous countries should in effect say to the overcrowded ones: " We don't propose to share our land with you, for—quite apart from our prejudices, which we admit—we believe that this would bring no permanent solution of the world's population problems. What we do believe is that you too can live comfortably at home, if you will limit your numbers and develop your resources; and, if you are prepared to do this, we on our part are willing to help you in the achievement of these ends to the full extent of our ability."

(ii) If the first of our two suggested supplementary steps might (through its recognition of the *status quo*) seem to deal unjustly with the more crowded (and largely non-European) peoples, the second would do something to correct this. It would consist in an

endeavour to bring about a frank recognition of the inevitability of change in the relative numbers of the different nations and races of mankind, and therefore also a change in relative power and influence so far as these depend on numbers. This is a matter to which we have already referred (at the conclusion of Chapter I) and there is no need to dwell on it again. The indications are that during the next half century the white-skinned races will decline in numbers and influence relatively to those of other colour, and that the same will happen with regard to the peoples of north-western Europe relatively to those of southern and south-eastern Europe and of the U.S.S.R. It would be well for this impending change to be realized in time, in order both that those whose numerical influence is declining may have a breathing space in which to cultivate a dignified resignation, and that those whose power is waxing may have an opportunity of learning their increasing responsibilities. As regards the former, their task (which might otherwise be bitter) will be rendered easier if they bear in mind that numbers, for all their undoubted importance, do not constitute the only, or indeed the most important, factor in world history. The white races have probably always been in a minority, yet their influence on human development during the last five hundred years at least (a good case could be made out for naming a much longer period) has greatly outweighed that of other races. Coming to smaller groups, what an enormous part in human culture has been played by the relatively tiny populations of Egypt, Palestine, and Greece! The western nations can still for many years (perhaps even for centuries) constitute the vanguard of human progress, relying not on mere

numbers but on the wisdom of their social institutions and the value of their contributions to the good life as it is actually lived by their individual citizens. Indeed, they are at present and may long remain the natural teachers of mankind, though if they are to continue in this role, they must not neglect the contributions of others, both those whose culture is older and those whose culture is in some respects younger than their own. And as regards the individual life, here surely, if democracy is right, is the final test; and here too we may remember that both in past times and in our own era individual welfare and development have often been highest in some of the world's smaller communities—e.g., the City States of Greece and Italy in the past and some of the small western nations of to-day. All things considered, there are ample ways in which the white races as a whole, and the inhabitants of the North Atlantic seaboard (together with their cousins in other regions of the world) in particular, can still play a noble and leading part in human affairs, even though their numbers, and perhaps too their material power, become relatively far smaller than they are at present.

The Question of Quality

These last reflections bring us to a matter to which, as the reader interested in eugenics may complain, we have devoted far too little attention—the question of quality. In our pre-occupation with the absolute and relative size of human populations have we not lost sight of the fact that human individuals, human cultures, and human races may differ enormously in quality—i.e., in those characteristics to which we attach value, e.g., such as physical vigour, health, beauty, in-

telligence, initiative, and moral character? If this is so, ought not our whole conception of a desirable solution of the world's population problems to be revised so as to ensure the utmost possible numerical predominance of those members of the human race who have the highest value? As an abstract proposition there is assuredly much to be said for this contention. Nevertheless, it involves certain serious difficulties—difficulties which to a large extent would seem to justify the preoccupation of the present book (as also that of many other contemporary treatments) with the more purely quantitative aspects of population problems.

In the first place, it is much harder to assess human values than to measure human numbers. There are many different desirable and undesirable qualities possessed by human beings, whether as individuals or as organized communities, and these qualities are excessively difficult to measure or to weigh one against the other.

In the second place, we still know all too little how far these qualities are due to biological or cultural factors respectively. We know that many physical qualities—e.g., skin colour and facial features—are determined by heredity, that on the other hand moral qualities and social behaviour are very largely (though almost certainly not entirely) moulded by environment. In so far as desirable human qualities are of the latter kind we must rely for their preservation or increase on cultural and educational measures rather than on the encouragement or restriction of any particular hereditary stocks; to that extent their consideration can be legitimately omitted from the treatment of our present subject.

In the course of the advance of biological and social

science the weight of accumulated evidence is apt to sway disconcertingly, first in one direction, then in another. This has unfortunately been the case with regard to the relative influence of Nature and nurture in the creation of desirable human traits. Thus with regard to intelligence, a trait which would certainly be listed very high among human characteristics which we would wish to foster (a trait, too, which can now be measured with what is—within the field of mental differences—a quite exceptional degree of accuracy), a quarter of a century ago, on the basis of the evidence then available, psychologists were justified in assuming that it differed appreciably in different races. Since then, however, further work has tended to show that the tests used were more affected by social and educational influences than had been suspected and that the observed racial differences were due chiefly, if not indeed entirely, to the fact that, of the individuals tested, those of one race had grown up in conditions which were more helpful for obtaining a good test result than had those of another. In so far as by careful selection of the persons tested the influence of these environmental factors was ruled out, the apparent racial differences in intelligence tended to disappear. At the present moment indeed, it would be rash to assert that the people belonging to any one human race or nation are on the average any more or less intelligent than those of another.*

What has emerged, however, from these and all other studies of the comparative intelligence of human

* See T. R. Garth, *Race Psychology*, 1935. O. Klineberg, *Race Differences*, 1935. A convenient summary of the evidence pointing in this direction is given in Ruth Benedict's *Race and Racism*, 1942.

groups (whether the groups in question are selected on a basis of race, sex, class, physique, or almost any other distinction not directly dependent on intelligence itself) is that the range of individual variation within each group is very large compared with any difference in average between the groups. How far these individual differences are themselves innately determined is itself to some extent still a matter of dispute. The fact, however, that they are found in a group of individuals who have grown up in the same environment and enjoyed approximately the same educational and social advantages (or handicaps) would certainly seem to show that they depend primarily upon innate qualities. There is evidence too (less conclusive perhaps, but still very considerable) that high or low intelligence tends to be inherited from parent to child. It would seem therefore that, so far as eugenic considerations are concerned, we should seek to perpetuate the most intelligent stocks within any group (including national and racial groups) rather than to favour one such group as against another. And though our evidence is still lamentably meagre, such as it is it points in the same direction with regard to many other characters of value, both physical and mental, so far as these depend on inheritable qualities.

The conclusion we can draw is that, if we desire the biological improvement of the human race, we can obtain it best by encouraging the fertility of the more highly endowed individuals, to whatever race or nation they belong, and by discouraging that of obviously deficient and inferior persons wherever found. On the score of eugenics therefore, there is no cause for worry in the mere fact that some races or nations are tending to supersede others

so far as numbers are concerned. The average capacity of the various human races (as distinct from the capacity of the individuals of which they are composed) is, it would seem, not so very different; and however different in degree and in kind may be their state of culture at the moment, it is probable that none of them is debarred by lack of innate capacity from eventual attainment of the highest standards of civilized society. Meanwhile the culturally superior nations or races, by adopting an attitude of quasi-parental responsibility towards the less advanced, can help to spread their own enlightenment among these latter, and thus still exercise a beneficent influence on humanity at large, even if (as has actually always been the case) they are numerically inferior to the backward populations. Indeed, with modern means of transport and communication, they can exercise it far more effectively than in the past.

A much more legitimate ground of anxiety is connected with the question whether, within any race or nation, there is in fact a differential fertility of such a kind that the inferior stocks are multiplying more rapidly than the better ones (better, that is, from the point of view of human valuation). There is considerable reason to suppose that in the western communities at least they are, inasmuch as the higher socio-economic classes have been limiting their families more drastically than the lower ones. Birth control has, indeed, in this respect been denounced as a dysgenic influence, while medicine, social services, and philanthropy have been accused of aggravating the evil, so to speak, at the other end—i.e., by reducing the death rate among the diseased, the impoverished,

the feckless, and the unintelligent, thus tending to diminish the intensity of the struggle for existence and the consequent " survival of the fittest " that would obtain in a state of Nature. Some writers have drawn a gloomy picture of the outlook for humanity from this cause alone. And their warning certainly deserves to be taken seriously. There are two considerations, however, that point to a mitigation of this threat to which they draw attention, and from the second of these considerations we can draw at least one practical corollary.

In the first place, there is obviously no complete or even very high correlation between desirable qualities and socio-economic status. True, in a competitive society those individuals with intelligence and initiative will, other things being equal, tend to get to the top (and then become relatively sterile in accordance with the habits of the class they have attained). But on the other hand, as has often been pointed out, the process of getting to the top in a socio-economic sense may not always require, or appeal to, the highest type of character; there may be many who, perhaps well and wisely, have chosen other goals. It may even be that the achievement of wealth and distinction is correlated with some relatively undesirable qualities (such, for instance, as those traditionally associated with individuals of the " smart Aleck " type), and the failure to transmit these qualities (if they are transmissible) would be nothing to deplore. Turning to the measurable trait of intelligence, there has indeed repeatedly been found a correlation between intelligence as measured by test and position in the socio-economic hierarchy (though here again, as we must remember, any differences in average between "classes"

are far smaller than the individual variabilities). This may be partly due to the said tendency for the better endowed to move upwards to the higher positions, and to that extent may reflect hereditary differences in intelligence; but it may also be due in part, as a good deal of recent research has suggested, to the fact that —as in the investigation of racial and national differences—the tests used are not unaffected by educational and social opportunity. To the extent that influences of the latter kind are at work, we must not assume that the smaller fertility of the "higher" classes necessarily implies a decline in the average endowment of a whole nation.

In the second place, there are, as several investigations in this and other countries have shown, strong indications that the differential fertility of various social classes is only a temporary phenomenon and that the practice of contraception is spreading downwards from the higher to the lower income groups. It is also spreading from the towns to the countryside, so that in England at the present day there is little difference in this respect between town and country dwellers, between manual and "black-coated" workers. It is only among some sections of the lowest income groups that the birth rate is still relatively high (and where, as Titmuss has recently pointed out,* the infantile death rate is still high). Though this general spread of infertility tends, of course, to aggravate the prospect of declining numbers in this country that is so exercising many minds, it may on the other hand tend to reduce any dysgenic effects due to differential fertility.

It also suggests (and here is the practical corollary) the obvious remedy for the dysgenic evil, which

* R. M. Titmuss, *Birth, Poverty, and Wealth*, 1943.

would consist in an intensified birth control campaign —perhaps we should more correctly say a birth control service—among the poorest and least responsible sections of the community. There is no reason to suppose that such people actually desire larger families than their more foresighted fellow citizens; it is only their poverty, their day-to-day attitude to life, and in some cases their lack of intelligence, which make them unwilling or unable to take practical "precautions" (the problem here being not unlike that presented on a larger scale in backward and illiterate countries). In so far as their more rapid reproduction is really a menace to the quality of the community, the easiest and most effective means of combating this menace would consist in providing them with a free and (so far as possible) foolproof contraceptive service, and in effectively bringing their attention to the facilities that it provides. The most difficult case of all is that of the mentally defective, and unfortunately it is here also that the evidence for the transmission of hereditary taint is clearest. Here if anywhere there is a good case (granted all reasonable precautions against abuse) for surgical sterilization; but if we shrink from this drastic method (perhaps in virtue of the operation in ourselves of the castration complex), the only satisfactory alternative may lie in the perfection of some method of relatively durable temporary sterilization (by means of X-rays or otherwise), such as those with which some practitioners are hopefully experimenting at the present time.

One final remark on the subject may be permitted. It is to the effect that our general considerations on the matter apply not only to the differences between nations or races and to the differences between socio-

economic classes within a nation, but also to the problems presented by the existence within a nation of a racial minority of traditionally inferior status (such as the negro minority in the U.S.A.). It is not our business here to deal with these hard problems in all their manifold complexity. Certain conclusions with regard to them, however, seem to emerge so clearly from what we have said that they may at least be briefly stated. They are as follows:—

(*a*) "The Philanthropic Policy" would aggravate these problems where they exist and create them in countries where at present they do not, whereas "The Neo-Malthusian Policy" is free from this objection.

(*b*) The supposed inferiority of the minority race is due principally to social and not to biological factors, and there seems little reason why the members of this race, given the necessary social, economic, and educational opportunities, should not eventually become worthy and valuable citizens even of a nation whose culture is racially foreign to them.

(*c*) The active encouragement of birth control among the minority group would tend to prevent them having a birth rate higher than that of the majority group, and this in turn would tend to allay anxiety and racial prejudice among the latter.

Race Suicide?

In our insistence throughout this book on the dangers of over- rather than of under-population the reader may have felt that we have done less than justice to those who in recent years have so eloquently warned us of the impending decline in the population of the western world. Even if we allow the fullest

possible weight to the psychological considerations dealt with in the previous chapter, which show the likelihood of an element of irrationalism in the alarm which this prospective decline is apt to cause, we shall yet surely feel some trepidation and some sorrow at the prospect of the diminution and perhaps eventual disappearance of the race or nation to which we belong. And even apart from any prejudice in favour of our own branch of mankind, may we not legitimately fear that ultimately (in an admittedly somewhat distant but still foreseeable future) the whole human race will fail to reproduce itself and thus become extinct? Contraception will thus in the long run have proved a lethal weapon and will lead to race suicide, as Theodore Roosevelt long ago suggested.

Indeed, we must admit the possibility of both the more immediate and the remoter catastrophe. In the delicate balance between individuation and genesis, man may not be the first—or the last—species to vanish from the earth as a result of coming down too heavily on the side of individuation. And through the discovery of contraception man has, as we have seen, put out of gear Nature's mechanism for ensuring the perpetuation of the race. His sexual drive is amply strong, but since he can satisfy it (even in perfectly " normal " fashion) in a way that does not lead to reproduction, and since he happens to have no corresponding urge for the creation of offspring, it is clear that anything in the nature of " instinct " alone is not sufficient to ensure the continuance of the species. But, as we have also noted, man has in so many matters ceased to act in accordance with simple instinct that it would be astonishing if this one

additional triumph of "reason" over instinct were to prove fatal (especially as extinction through contraception would be a long-time process,* very different in this respect from the possibilities of cataclysmic annihilation inherent in the discovery of the atomic bomb). Indeed, as we have incidentally seen yet again (in our examination of the psychological resistances to the Neo-Malthusian doctrine), even if man has no instinctive desire for children, he has yet plenty of motives of a more complex kind that would be likely to make him very averse to the disappearance of his race. Some of these motives may even be increasing in power. For instance, with the decline in a belief in a personal life beyond the grave there has probably gone an increased interest in the future of society. To work for posterity has to some extent taken the place that the idea of working to fulfil the will of God or working for one's personal salvation occupied in earlier generations. Even if men were far more completely emancipated from irrational motives than is possible by any method of treatment as yet known, their inherent narcissism (or, if we prefer an alternative concept, the vital urge within them) would in all probability still impel them to desire at least that kind of immortality which can be enjoyed vicariously in contemplating the life and work of generations yet to come. Men, moreover, are not

* It may even happen, as has been suggested in some quarters, that this process would be slowed down or even eventually reversed, through the indirect action of contraception itself. Birth control, if easily available to all, should select for philoprogenitiveness, since it will be employed least by those who (whatever the ultimate nature of this desire) want children most. If the strength of the desire for children is to any extent inherited, the succeeding generations will also have more children, while those in whom this desire is feeble will tend to die out.

purely selfish or solitary animals; they are impelled by their very nature and limitations to live and co-operate with others, and indeed it would seem that they can find their fullest satisfaction and development only in service to some end beyond their individual selves. In the two world wars millions of men have been willing to give their lives that their countries might endure, while for the same end whole populations have almost uncomplainingly abandoned cherished privileges, liberties, and comforts—indeed, have been ready to live if necessary in the utmost danger and privation. If human beings are prepared to make these major sacrifices for the sake of their community, it would seem ridiculous that they should be unwilling to make the much smaller one required to keep it in being by the provision of an adequate supply of future citizens.

If we understood the causes of the differences in attitude shown in the two cases, war and race suicide respectively, we might reasonably expect to throw some light upon the means available for dealing with the latter danger. Some such causes at least are fairly evident even to a superficial view. War involves an immediate and obvious threat from an external enemy; it clearly creates a condition of emergency, whereas the danger of race suicide is still a relatively remote one. Again, in virtue of its uniforms, military trappings, display of power, and the long-standing "glorious" traditions with which it is associated, war has a glamour and a fascination which is denied to the process of producing and rearing a family, associated as this is with the partially tabooed subject of sex on the one hand and with the humdrum daily round of domesticity upon the other. War has

always been regarded as a serious, noble, masculine activity, contrasted with which the rearing of children is a dull feminine occupation, full of " chores " and trivialities—an occupation which, it is true, can be regarded sentimentally, but which is lacking in any stirring emotional appeal. War, too, is obviously an affair of the whole nation, clearly evoking the idea of service for the community and reinforcing our individual emotions with that extra strength which mass action and mass feeling can provide, whereas the rearing of a family is traditionally a private affair, a field in which until quite recently purely personal desires and personal responsibilities have been considered paramount. Finally, war is an age-old problem, with which humanity has had to deal throughout recorded history, while the problem of a scarcity of children is a new one to which we have not yet learnt to adjust ourselves.

From this brief comparison it would seem that if we wish to call out on behalf of " bigger families " some little of that spirit of sacrifice which is so manifest in war, we should endeavour to create at least in some degree the conditions which so clearly conduce to war-time patriotic fervour. It is true that the danger of race suicide can hardly ever become so immediately pressing and obvious as are the dangers of war, but we can perhaps, by appropriate measures, link on the creation of children and the cares of family life to the needs of the nation far more clearly than we have done in the past; we can treat maternity and parenthood generally with greater honour and consideration; we can impress upon ourselves that here is a new social problem, one that we have not had to face before, but one that deserves the most serious considera-

tion that our politicians and our social scientists can give it.*

Steps in this direction are of course already being taken. One of the first and most obvious of these is to discover what are the conscious motives that induce parents to limit their families. The answers received to various questionnaires and interrogatories reveal a very considerable number of social and medical reasons (including housing difficulties, poor health of the wife, war-time worries, desire to give children the best opportunities, and the general unsettled condition of the world), but easily the most important are those which fall into what might be broadly called the financial category—children are considered too expensive.

As regards the poorer income groups in this country, there is evidence to show that these "reasons" are sometimes very reasonable. Thus, to take the point of view of physical well-being alone, it was found in a recent study in Birmingham that, "while only 3% of the families with one child had an income which was insufficient to provide for minimum needs, the proportion rose to 55% for families with four children and 82% for families with six." † If the investigator really succeeded in obtaining his figures from families which were as far as possible comparable in all respects except the number of children, and if his findings are otherwise reliable, the situation is a very serious one and supports the view that an intensive

* In this respect it is perhaps comparable to that other new and even more urgent problem of the creation of loyalty to a super-national organization in which our various national loyalties can be embraced and co-ordinated.

† *Rebuilding Family Life in a Post-War World*, quoting J. Yudkin, *Lancet*, 1944, ii, 385.

birth rate campaign could be successful under existing conditions only at the cost of a decline in physical health among the poorer sections of the population. Clearly larger " real " incomes in general, or failing that family allowances or priorities or some similar measures, are needed to meet difficulties of this sort. And how are we to find the wherewithal in a world large parts of which are suffering from every kind of shortage? It might at least be wise to wait until the devastation of war has been made good. It is surely both cruel and useless to ask parents to take responsibility for more children than they (or perhaps even the community) can adequately house and feed.

But, it will be said—and with much justice—the financial considerations, which appear to play such a big role among the reasons for family restriction, are after all but relative. With the poor the advent of more than a very few children may curtail the actual necessities of life; with the better-off it is the luxuries of life (the car, the club, expensive schools, clothes, " pleasures," hobbies and holidays, the desire to keep up " appearances ") that are threatened by larger families. So real is this factor that it has even been suggested that family allowances should bear some relation to the already existing income of the family. There are, however, obviously many difficulties, both social and financial, attaching to this application of the principle " to him who hath shall be given," psychologically (and perhaps eugenically) justified as it may be for its particular purpose. We are, indeed, here face to face with the fundamental problem in its clearest form. The process of individuation, as exemplified in the use of the diverse amenities of life that modern civilization has provided, can go on

indefinitely; human needs and desires are so varied and so difficult to satisfy that, however rich the opportunities of life, however satisfactory the environment, there will always be a possibility of acquiring some further means to satisfaction—a possibility which will have to be sacrificed if the time, energy, and money that would otherwise be available for it are devoted to the upbringing of a family.

What is most needed, perhaps, is a healthy realization of the law of decreasing returns as it applies to expenditure on luxuries—each additional sum spent in this way tending to give a smaller increment of satisfaction than the previous sum of equal amount (as we can easily realize if we compare the pleasure likely to be experienced by a poor man and a rich man respectively at a sudden windfall of £100). Incidentally, such a realization may perhaps be very considerably helped by the forcible curtailment of expenditure on luxuries occasioned by the war, by rationing, and the likelihood of the continuance of high taxation into the peace years. The habit of availing themselves of social services—e.g., infant welfare clinics—beginning to be formed by all social classes, together with the relative equalization of money income (due to full employment, war expenditure, and the intended provision of further social services on a large scale) should also work in the same direction. In a word, democratization in the widest sense would seem to be the most likely means of bringing about a curtailment in expenditure on luxuries, and therefore probably a diminution in the appeal of the more extravagant forms of "individuation" among the well-to-do. For many years there has been an increasing feeling that ostentatious luxury for purely individual

ends is vulgar and in doubtful taste, and during the war it became "unpatriotic" also. If we wish for larger families among the higher income groups, we should do well to perpetuate and foster such an attitude. Indeed, there is already evidence from some recent investigations that there is a tendency for the former relation between wealth and fertility to be reversed—i.e., that (over a large range of incomes at least) the families with larger incomes both desire more children * and are actually beginning to have more children † than those with smaller incomes. If corroborated, and if it continues, this tendency would indeed be satisfactory from several points of view.

Perhaps, going further, we may say that this particular tendency is only one manifestation of a general trend towards greater fertility in the western countries that has now set in, and to which we have earlier referred. It is, as we remarked, too early yet to say with any certainty whether this tendency is likely to be permanent or to what causes it is chiefly due. Whatever they are, it would seem that they must be operative over a wide western area (unless, indeed, by some strange coincidence the rise in the birth rate is due to the simultaneous working of different causes in the different countries concerned). In the opinion of those who published the latest figures from the Bank for International Settlements, the most likely single cause is the widespread increase of employment. If this view is right, it only emphasizes the importance, from another angle, of economic and social factors the practical significance of which is already (we may hope) quite

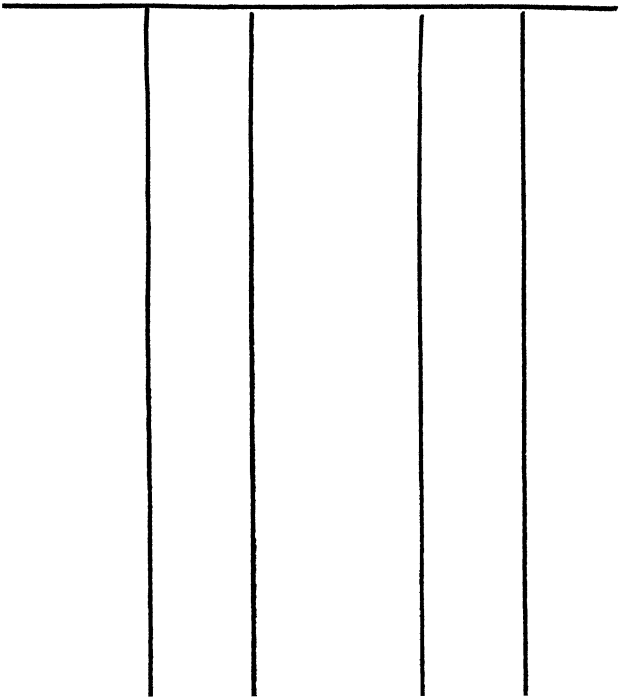
* See *Rebuilding Family Life in the Post-War World*, p. 94.
† See Eva M. Hubback, *Population Facts and Policies*, p. 15.

fully recognized. If, as a result of successful efforts to deal with the problem of unemployment or of any other relevant problems, the trend continues, there will be little need to worry about any catastrophic decline in the population of western nations, and we shall have to cope only with the less difficult task of reconciling ourselves to a relative decline as compared with the populations of some other countries. If, on the other hand, the trend in question proves to be only temporary, we shall have to continue to make further investigations and to take corresponding steps along the lines just indicated, or perhaps on other lines not as yet seriously envisaged.* But even in this event, if our previous considerations as to the motives that may be invoked to prevent "race suicide" are at all correct, the discovery of such practical steps should not really be so very difficult.

And meanwhile the realization of a potential threat of decline or extinction of certain branches of the human race (perhaps ultimately of all mankind) may do us good. It may teach us to value human life, which until recently has been so cheap a commodity that we have been apt to take the supply of it for granted. We shall have to recognize that parenthood

* Among the measures of this kind that suggest themselves are: (*a*) the removal of the stigma of illegitimacy, so that those women who desire to have children but are unable or unwilling to marry may without reproach contribute their share to the future population; (*b*) greater provision, either by private adoption or in institutions, for the upbringing (again, of course, if possible without any stigma or suggestion of inferiority) of the children of those—men or women, married or unmarried—who are eugenically sound but lacking in parental feeling and uninterested in the domestic side of life (with the opening of new fields for women's work, the number of such persons who find an all-absorbing interest outside the home is likely to increase); (*c*) various possibilities opened up by the new technique of artificial insemination.

is a worthy occupation, one which gives at least as great a service to the community as many others which in the past have been more highly honoured. And when human beings have been created, we shall have to treat them more considerately than we have done in the past; for they are valuable and, when the control of parenthood is within the reach of all, will not be so easy to replace. This control, assuredly one of the most momentous discoveries in human history, will make us realize the true significance and import of Ruskin's dictum (which in an overcrowded world seems at first so strange and startling). "there is no wealth but life."



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